

AERONAUTICA IMPERIALIS



TAROS AIR WAR CAMPAIGN BOOK



TAROS AIR WAR



CONTENTS

AIR WAR IN THE 41ST MILLENNIUM	3	SCENARIOS	55
WHAT YOU WILL NEED	4	The Dogfight.....	62
THE BASICS	7	The Chase.....	63
SQUADRON LISTS	10	Subterranean Assault.....	64
THE TURN	13	Sky-fortress Attack.....	65
MOVEMENT	15	Canyon Attack Run.....	66
The Movement Phase Sequence.....	15	AERONAUTICA IMPERIALIS CAMPAIGNS	68
Throttle.....	15	SQUADRON LISTS	72
Speed.....	15	IMPERIAL NAVY	76
Move and Manoeuvre.....	16	Avenger Strike Fighter.....	77
The Edge of the Area of Engagement.....	17	Lightning and Lightning Strike Fighter.....	78
Adjust Altitude.....	18	Imperial Arvus Lighter.....	79
FIRING	20	ASTRA MILITARUM	80
The Firing Phase Sequence.....	20	Valkyrie and Vendetta Assault Craft.....	81
Air-to-Air Fire.....	21	Vulture Gunship.....	82
Special Situation – Tailing.....	23	Hydra Flak Battery.....	83
Weapon Special Rules.....	24	Basilisk Anti-aircraft Emplacement.....	83
Air-to-Ground Fire.....	26	Flight Commander Megana Ayce.....	84
Ground-to-Air Fire.....	28	Flight Lieutenant Dyce Vander.....	85
END PHASE	29	T'AU AIR CASTE	86
The End Phase Sequence.....	29	Barracuda.....	87
Stalled Aircraft.....	29	Tiger Shark.....	88
Recovering from a Spin.....	30	Tiger Shark AX-1-0.....	89
Tailing.....	30	Remora Drone.....	90
ENDING THE GAME	31	KV 126 Skyfire Platform.....	91
THE AIR WAR OVER TAROS	32	KV 129 Stormfury Platform.....	91
		Kor'la Kae O'ar.....	92
		Kor'la Dor'n O'ka.....	93
		QUICK REFERENCE	94
		MOVEMENT DIAGRAMS	96

Aeronautica Imperialis: Taros Air War © Copyright Games Workshop Limited 2020. Aeronautica Imperialis, GW, Games Workshop, Citadel, Warhammer 40,000 and all associated logos, illustrations, images, names, creatures, races, vehicles, locations, weapons, characters, and the distinctive likenesses thereof, are either ® or TM, and/or © Games Workshop Limited, variably registered around the world. All Rights Reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publishers.

ISBN: 978-1-78826-926-1

This is a work of fiction. All the characters and events portrayed in this book are fictional, and any resemblance to real people or incidents is purely coincidental. British Cataloguing-in-Publication Data. A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Games Workshop Web site: www.games-workshop.com

Forge World Web site: www.forgeworld.co.uk

AIR WAR IN THE 41ST MILLENNIUM

It is an age of all-consuming war. The galaxy burns from end to end like never before, brutal conflict engulfs worlds beyond count. The Imperium is beset on all sides by enemies and threats. Ork hordes teem in numbers unimaginable. Traitors besiege the worlds of Mankind from within and without. Forces as old as time stir from their slumber on planets long thought dead. Young, vibrant enemies build empires that encroach upon the borders of the Imperium.

Across every sector, in every theatre of war, the forces of Mankind battle ferociously for survival against these threats and more. From the cold depths of space to the blazing hellscape of irradiated deserts, from the baffling hearts of hollow worlds to the crushing depths of chemical seas, nowhere in humanity's vast dominion is free of battle. War rages unending on every front – it is the only constant.

Air war is a vital element within all of these ongoing struggles, for when the skies are dominated, control over the land below soon follows. This is the ancient logic of air war, a truth Mankind knows and holds sacred. Knowledge imparted down long millennia of warfare but, sadly, knowledge often tested and found wanting. Air superiority is often only fleeting, the respite it brings to ground forces all too brief. All too quickly the enemy rallies its strength and the tide of war and fortunes of those fighting changes once more.

All across the Emperor's realm, desperate aerial combat is fought; wings of fighters and bombers sally forth from ground bases and void ships in relentless waves, adding their meagre strength to that gone before them, hoping against hope to tip the balance in their favour and gain some miniscule measure of supremacy that might lead to a lasting conquest. From sprawling hive worlds to desolate ocean worlds, from lush agri worlds to lifeless gas giants, valiant pilots seek to conquer war zones that ground forces could never hope to claim – war zones that, in most cases, ground forces could never even hope to survive.

Whole fleets of combat aircraft are committed to the fray. Even as the endless waves of aircraft darken the skies, the wreckage of those that came before them litters the landscape below in an ever increasing detritus of ruined craft, clogging the skies with palls of thick, oily smoke and billowing flame. Casualties are inevitably high. Air war is fast and deadly, the tiniest mistake or miscalculation resulting in a pilot and their armoured steed tumbling to the unforgiving world below in fiery ruin.

No amount of training can prepare a rookie pilot for the reality of what is to come. A pilot can fly many sorties and complete numerous missions in hostile skies, but until they are blooded in combat they have no comprehension of what aerial warfare truly means. The sheer, breakneck speed and dizzying assault on the senses is something that cannot be experienced in test conditions. Legends can be born or lives lost as a result of decisions made and actions taken in the briefest of moments. Consequently, the one staple, the one unifying trait shared by pilots of any race, is that their first experience of action may well be their last.

Not all pilots face a swift, fiery end however. For every squadron destined to spin into oblivion, one or two pilots will overcome the dangers and quell their fears. Such natural airborne warriors show an almost preternatural skill, quickly mastering the subtle nuances of their craft, able to jink and dive out of fire arcs and target locks with the grace of a dancer. They develop a sixth sense for danger and a rapacious hunger for the thrill of the kill. With every enemy callously dispatched, the reputation of the aerial killer grows and becomes more fearsome among friend and foe alike, growing until the pilot becomes lauded as an Ace. Many an Ace pilot rises to command of a squadron, their talent, experience and daring inspiring a new wave of pilots to ever greater deeds even as they continue to carve their own personal legend.

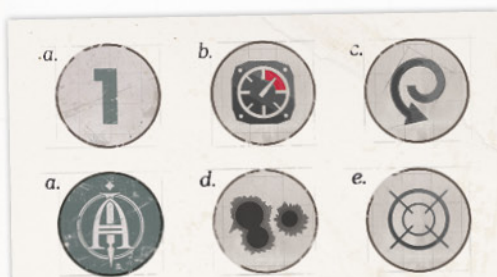
Rivalries develop between opposing Aces active in the same theatre of war, long games of cat and mouse between them played out in a series of aerial duels and close-run firefights. Some Aces will view their enemies simply as villainous scum to be eradicated. Others develop a grudging respect for a hated foe, even coming to feel a strange relish for each fresh encounter, eager to test their mettle against a worthy opponent once more. Many such vendettas become legends, retold long after those involved have met their inevitable end, stories kept alive amongst the next generation of pilots to carry on the war in the legendary Ace's stead.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

[1] TOKENS

Aeronautica Imperialis makes use of several types of token. These are used to keep track of damage, to indicate the Ace Manoeuvre an aircraft plans to perform, or to remind players that an aircraft has stalled or fallen into a dangerous spin.*

- a. Manoeuvre tokens (numbered 1 to 8)
- b. Stall
- c. Spin
- d. Structure Points
- e. Tailing



TAW4.1: Graphic representation of Aeronautica Imperialis tokens.
(Extracted from Training Manual 373/wq 'The Rites of Aerial Warfare')

[2] AIRCRAFT

Games of Aeronautica Imperialis are played with forces made up of finely detailed Citadel miniatures.

[3] DICE

Dice are used throughout the game to determine the effectiveness of shooting, to perform dangerous manoeuvres and more.

[4] ACE MANOEUVRES/REFERENCE SHEET

A handy reference sheet showing the manoeuvres that aircraft can perform.*

[5] RULEBOOK

This book contains the complete rules. Always a useful reference to keep close to hand.

[6] AREA OF ENGAGEMENT

Games of Aeronautica Imperialis are played on a grid of hexes overlaid onto an aerial map depicting a war-torn world of the 41st Millennium. Fold-out Areas of Engagement are available from Games Workshop or within the *Aeronautica Imperialis: Skies of Fire* boxed set.



AERONAUTICA IMPERIALIS BASES

i. Front Arc

This is 60 degrees directly forward of the aircraft's base.

ii. Rear Arc

This is 60 degrees directly behind the aircraft's base.

iii. Side Arcs

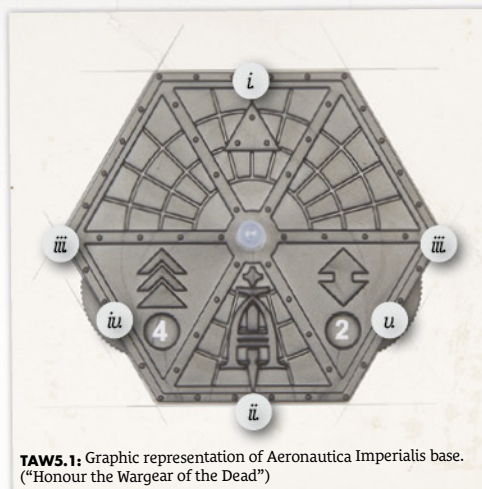
This is 120 degrees to either side of the aircraft's base.

iv. Speed Dial

Used to record the aircraft's current Speed.

v. Altitude Dial

Used to record the aircraft's current Altitude.



TAWS.1: Graphic representation of Aeronautica Imperialis base.
("Honour the Wargear of the Dead")



**Tokens and reference cards to use in your games of Aeronautica Imperialis can be photocopied from the back of this book and can also be found within the Aeronautica Imperialis: Skies of Fire boxed set.*

BROKEN HILLS
OUTPOST

AERONAUTICA IMPERIALIS

Welcome to Aeronautica Imperialis, the game of aerial combat in the 41st Millennium: a dark age of humanity where the Imperium of Mankind fights a constant battle for survival in a hostile galaxy. Aeronautica Imperialis allows players to command squadrons of aircraft in deadly battles, high amongst the clouds and vapour trails as fighters twist and turn in dogfights and bomber waves unleash devastation from the skies above through storms of flak.

LZ THETA
TALLAEN 48/TH

*...under processing alert for
...it a priority target
for the first phase of our landings.*

HYDRO 23-30

TAROKEEN /
TAROS

LZ GAMMA
DROOKIAN 111

EM-SAT

*It's not clear why the
aliens are dug in on the
Phyrra Heights, the 11th
Drookian Infantry division
is ordered to advance into the
area to find out.*



THE BASICS

This book details the core rules of the game – all of the information players need to move aircraft and engage the enemy in vicious skyborne dogfights, along with details of the forces available.

The game has been designed to allow players to pit squadrons of around one to twelve aircraft a side against one another. A game involving one or two aircraft per side may only take half an hour to play; a larger game involving 12 aircraft may take two to three hours.

Players should note that *Aeronautica Imperialis* is a game, not a simulation. In reality, aerial combat is dizzyingly complex and incredibly technical. The game represents this in a simplified manner, using easy to understand rules to express complex situations, resulting in a tactical game that will reward boldness and the ability to plan ahead, rather than becoming bogged down in minutiae.

Whilst these rules cover all of the basics, situations may arise on the tabletop that cause players some confusion. This is the ‘*what happens if?*’ question, when a set of extraordinary circumstances collide. No rules set can cover all eventualities, and if players come to an impasse and the rulebook does not provide a clear solution then the enjoyment of the game must come first – roll a dice to decide the matter if necessary, and let the game continue. In the end, the only rule that really matters is that both players should enjoy themselves.

With that said, pilots, prepare for take-off!

FIRST PRINCIPLES

Before going into depth regarding the rules of the game, it is worth establishing some initial principles and conventions to keep in mind:

Measuring Distances

As *Aeronautica Imperialis* is played on a hex grid, measuring distances is a simple matter of counting hexes. If an aircraft moves four hexes, for example, it will move from the hex it is in, through three hexes and end its movement in the fourth hex, thus moving four hexes.

Dice

Aeronautica Imperialis uses regular six-sided dice, marked 1 to 6. The game may require a single dice to be rolled, in which case the rules will say ‘roll a D6’, whilst ‘roll two D6’ means roll two single dice at the same time. Alternatively, the game may require several dice be rolled and added together – for example ‘roll 2D6’ means roll two dice and add the results together.

D3: The rules might also call for a D3 to be rolled, but an actual three-sided dice is not necessary. To roll a D3, roll a D6 and halve the result, rounding up to the nearest whole number.

Modifying Rolls: Sometimes, players will be instructed to modify a dice roll – for example, the rules might say to roll a D6+1. In this case, they would roll a D6 and add 1 to the result. If the rules ever instruct the player to halve a result (or divide it in any other way), any fractions are rounded up, unless instructed otherwise. A dice roll can never be modified to 0 or lower, and any natural roll of a 1 is always a fail, regardless of modifiers.

The Infinite Skies

The open sky is a very large place and aircraft have plenty of room to manoeuvre. In *Aeronautica Imperialis*, aircraft cannot collide, even if a moving aircraft passes through a hex occupied by another aircraft. Should a moving aircraft ever be obliged to end its movement in an occupied hex, the moving aircraft will continue moving in the same direction until it can be placed in the first unoccupied hex.

Take-backs and Changing One’s Mind

It is not uncommon for players of any game to second guess themselves occasionally, saying that they are about to do something before immediately changing their mind. As a general rule, players should be tolerant of this in their opponents as they will likely do it themselves. However, once dice are rolled for any reason, or Speed or Altitude dials are adjusted, players must abide by their decision; they can no longer go back and change anything that came before the dice roll or the adjustment!

Designer's Note – Stunt Bases

Sometimes it may prove impossible to place two miniatures without them interfering with one another, possibly even knocking each other over! In these instances we have found it very useful to use a 'Stunt Base'. A Stunt Base is simply an empty base which can be swapped out for one of the problematic miniatures, marking its position correctly until such a time as one of the miniatures moves away and the Stunt Base can be replaced by the miniature again. Note: We call them Stunt Bases because it is much more fun to say than 'Proxy Base'!

BUILDING A FORCE

Players build a force of aircraft using the Squadron Lists section of this book, up to an agreed points limit. Each aircraft has a points cost and most have additional weapons listed which they may take for an increased points cost. A force can contain any combination of aircraft from a single Squadron List, although many scenarios impose restrictions on this. For example, some scenarios will restrict a player's force to only one or two aircraft classes, whilst other scenarios will state that a force must contain at least one aircraft of a certain class.

A player's force may be equal to or up to 10 points below the agreed points limit, but it may not be more than the agreed points limit. For example, if two players have agreed a limit of 200 points, neither player's force can be 189 points or 201 points.

ACE MANOEUVRES AND TOKENS

In Aeronautica Imperialis, aircraft follow set-piece manoeuvres as determined by the Ace Manoeuvres (explained on page 16) and shown on the Reference cards. There are eight Ace Manoeuvres, all named accordingly and numbered 1 to 8 for ease of use, which cover a range of options from simple banking turns to complex side-slips and stall-turns, with 1 being the most simple and 8 being the most complex. The Ace Manoeuvres an aircraft can attempt are dictated by its Manoeuvrability characteristic.

The Manoeuvre tokens are used during the Choose Manoeuvres phase of each turn. Once a player has decided upon the Ace Manoeuvre an aircraft will perform during the turn, a Manoeuvre token showing the Ace Manoeuvre number is placed face-down next to the model's base on the tabletop.

AIRCRAFT CLASS

Aeronautica Imperialis allows players to fight dramatic battles in the cloud-strewn wildernesses of alien skies. The models used to play Aeronautica Imperialis represent various aircraft of the 41st Millennium. These fall into the following broad categories:

Scouts

These tend to be very small and lightweight aircraft, carrying minimal weaponry, if they carry any at all. Scouts may be used for reconnaissance missions, observing enemy formations and movements. This category may also include civilian aircraft or transport vessels; often carrying important individuals and requiring escort by more heavily armed fighter wings.

Fighters

Small, fast aircraft, highly manoeuvrable and well-armed. Fighters are generally used for air-to-air combat, intercepting and attacking other aircraft, but many also use their weaponry to strafe ground forces. Some may carry bombs or rockets beneath their wings to increase their effectiveness against ground targets.

Bombers

Larger, heavier aircraft. Although generally less manoeuvrable than Fighters or Scouts, Bombers can endure more damage, carry heavy payloads of bombs and rockets, and may have many defensive weapons. Some Bombers are specially designed for low-level ground attacks as well as high-level bombing. It is convenient for large craft with high transport capacities to be designated as Bombers due to similarities in their size and manoeuvrability.



Ground Defences

These are not actually aircraft at all (!), but static, ground-mounted weapons capable of attacking aircraft, such as anti-aircraft missiles or flak batteries. Able to target enemy aircraft using the Ground-to-Air firing rules, Ground Defences can in turn be attacked and destroyed by aircraft just like any ground target, using the Air-to-Ground firing rules.

Unlike ground targets, which are often objectives to be destroyed or even rescued as determined by the scenario being played, Ground Defences are purchased as part of a player's force as described previously.

The rules refer to 'aircraft' in most cases and this will usually include Scouts, Fighters, Bombers and Ground Defences. Where a distinction is required, the rules will refer to Ground Defences specifically.

Ground Defences are not mounted on Aeronautica Imperialis bases and so will usually not occupy a full hex. They are however considered to fully occupy the hex they are in for the purposes of range, both to and from the Ground Defence.

PREPARING THE GAME

Aeronautica Imperialis can be played on any suitably-sized, flat gaming area marked with a grid of 2" hexes. This is referred to as the Area of Engagement. Terrain rarely features in the open skies, so none is needed. A small dogfight between one or two aircraft per player can be played within a small Area of Engagement, roughly 2'x2' square. As the size of the forces used increases, so too should the size of the Area of Engagement, with the average size of an Area of Engagement being 3'x3', and particularly large battles between forces of 10 or more aircraft per side, or complex scenarios featuring multiple ground objectives requiring an Area of Engagement of 6'x3'.

Designer's Note – Area of Engagement

In most tabletop games, the gaming area is usually referred to as 'the battlefield'. However, battles in Aeronautica Imperialis are fought in the open skies, and such terrestrial terms didn't seem appropriate. 'Area of Engagement' has a suitably military feel and one can easily imagine it being a term used by an Imperial Navy pilot of the 41st Millennium.



SQUADRON LISTS

The Squadron Lists section of this book (see page 72) presents profiles for all of the aircraft currently available to play in Aeronautica Imperialis. Each profile contains the characteristics, weapon options and special rules for each aircraft. These tell players how fast, manoeuvrable and well-armed an aircraft is, as well as detailing any special rules they or their weapons may have and any alternative weapon options available to them.

AIRCRAFT PROFILES

An aircraft profile is broken down into the following sections:

Name [1]

The name by which aircraft of this type are commonly known.

Class [2]

This is the aircraft's class: i.e., Scout, Fighter or Bomber.

Points [3]

How many points the aircraft costs, used when creating a force as described on page 73.

Special Rules [4]

Some aircraft benefit from special rules. Some may be unique to that aircraft and will be detailed in full on the aircraft's profile. Others are more common and only the name will be present, with the rule being detailed in full elsewhere in this book.

Structure [5]

The number of damaging hits an aircraft can take before it is no longer airworthy and drops from the sky. When an aircraft has taken a number of damaging hits equal to or greater than its Structure characteristic, it has been shot down as described in the Firing section (see page 20). An aircraft's Structure characteristic is reduced by 1 point for every damaging hit the aircraft suffers.

Throttle [6]

This allows an aircraft to accelerate or decelerate. It is used at the start of an aircraft's movement to increase or decrease Speed before performing any manoeuvres.

Ace Manoeuvres [7]

Different aircraft are capable of performing differing Ace Manoeuvres. This is governed by their size, speed, aerodynamics and various other factors. This characteristic presents a list of the Ace Manoeuvres the aircraft can perform by number. For example, an Imperial Lightning can perform 1-7, whereas an Imperial Valkyrie can only perform 1-4. In some cases, an aircraft may be able to perform more select manoeuvres, such as 1, 3 and 5.

Min Speed [8]

The minimum speed at which an aircraft can travel. Should an aircraft ever attempt to reduce its Speed below its Min Speed, for any reason, it will Stall and risks going into a Spin.

Max Speed [9]

The maximum speed at which an aircraft can travel. An aircraft cannot choose to exceed its Max Speed, and should one ever be forced to attempt to do so, it may Break Up.

Max Altitude [10]

This is the maximum altitude at which an aircraft can safely operate. Should an aircraft ever attempt to exceed its Max Altitude, for any reason, it will Stall and risks going into a Spin.

Note that the minimum Altitude any aircraft can safely travel at is Altitude 1. This is true of all aircraft; hence there is no Min Altitude characteristic.

Handling [11]

This characteristic describes how easy an aircraft is to handle. A low number means that the aircraft handles very well, responding almost instantaneously and in some cases almost flying itself! A high number means that the aircraft is very unresponsive to the pilot, requiring a high degree of concentration or skill. Handling is used to determine how easily an aircraft can recover from a Stall or pull out of a Spin.

Transport [12]

For most aircraft, this will be shown as a '0', but certain Bomber class aircraft that can carry a cargo of troops or fighting equipment will have a numerical Transport characteristic. The rules for delivering such cargoes are covered later in this book.

Fuel [13]

For most aircraft, this will be shown as a ∞, but some, i.e., those that carry very little fuel, will have a numerical Fuel value. This is the number of turns the aircraft can fly for, after which it is removed from play. For example, an aircraft with a Fuel characteristic of 2 could operate for two turns before running out of fuel and crashing.

Weaponry

This section of an aircraft's profile lists the weapons the aircraft is armed with as standard, and includes the following weapon characteristics:

Weaponry [14]: The primary weapons for the class of aircraft.

Fire Arc [15]: The Fire Arc, as shown on the model's base, into which the weapon can fire.

Firepower (FPR) [16]: How many D6 are rolled to hit for the weapon at Short, Medium and Long range.

Damage (DMG) [17]: The score required on a D6 to damage the target on a successful hit and in turn cause it to lose a Structure point.

Ammo [18]: This shows how many shots an aircraft can make with a weapon before running out of ammunition. In most cases this will be shown as UL (unlimited), meaning the weapon has unlimited ammunition. Where this is shown as a numerical value (1, 2 or 3), this number is reduced by 1 every time this weapon is fired.

Special [19]: Any additional special rules the weapon has.

Additional Weaponry

Most aircraft can take additional weapons. What these are, how many an aircraft can select and how many points each upgrade costs is explained in the aircraft's entry in the Squadron Lists section.

AIRCRAFT CARDS

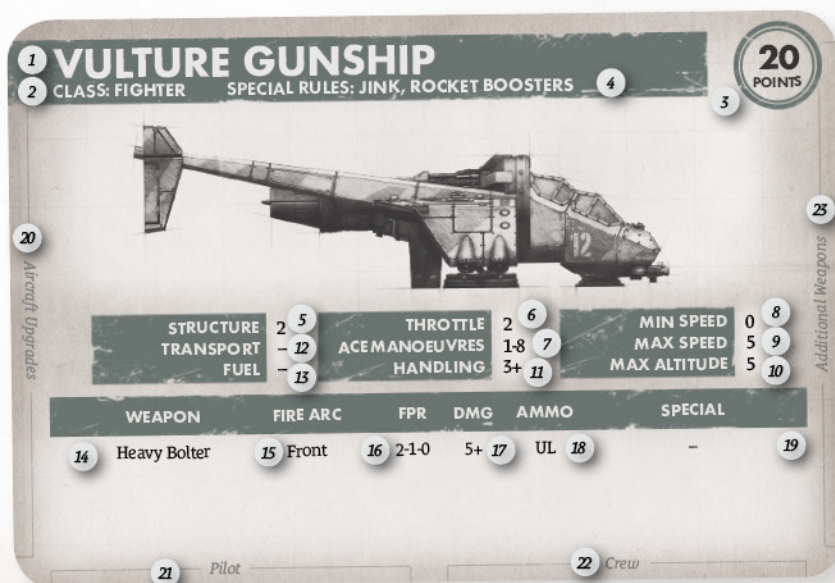
The Aircraft cards, available separately, feature four other sections where additional cards can be placed, showing upgrades the aircraft has been equipped with. These are:

Aircraft Upgrades [20]: If the aircraft has been given any upgrades, these can be shown by placing a corresponding card here, providing a ready reference.

Pilot [21]: Some supplements will contain rules for pilot upgrades. These may be skills earned during campaign play or named Aces purchased as an upgrade. Cards detailing these improvements can be placed here.

Crew [22]: As above, some supplements will contain rules for crew upgrades for larger aircraft. Cards detailing these upgrades may be placed here for reference.

Additional Weapons [23]: If an aircraft has been upgraded to carry any additional weapons, cards may be placed here detailing their profiles for ease of reference.



THE RULES

This section covers the core rules needed to play a game of Aeronautica Imperialis. The turn sequence is explained in full, including movement and firing (be it air-to-air, air-to-ground or ground-to-air). As is the End phase, during which players attempt to re-start stalled engines and recover from deadly spins!



THE TURN

During aerial combat, a tremendous amount of action happens in a very short space of time. Aircraft climb and dive, weaving to avoid fire, banking and rolling left and right. Weapons blaze away, taking snap-shots as enemy aircraft pass through a pilot's crosshairs. Aeronautica Imperialis represents the ebb and flow of aerial combat using a turn sequence in which players take turns to move their aircraft and fire their weapons.

A turn is split into phases. Each separate phase is completed before moving on to the next phase. Once all of the phases are complete, the turn ends and a new turn begins. A single turn plays as follows:

TURN SUMMARY

Phase 1. Choose Manoeuvres: Both players choose an Ace Manoeuvre for each of their eligible aircraft and place Manoeuvre tokens accordingly.

Phase 2. Initiative: Both players roll a D6. The player with the highest score wins the initiative this turn.

Phase 3. Tailing Fire: Aircraft that are Tailing another aircraft, as determined in the previous End phase, may fire at the tailed aircraft. The player that won the initiative always chooses an aircraft and fires first.

Phase 4. Movement: The player with the initiative decides who goes first, choosing to move one of their aircraft or making their opponent make the first move. Players then alternate choosing and moving aircraft until all aircraft have moved.

Phase 5. Firing: The player that moved first will now also fire first, choosing one of their aircraft to fire at the enemy. Players then alternate choosing an aircraft and firing all of its available weapons until all aircraft that wish to fire have done so.

Phase 6. End Phase: Starting with the player with the initiative, both players determine if any of their aircraft that Stalled will be able to recover, or if any aircraft that are in a Spin are able to recover. Tailing is also determined now. If this is the last turn of the game, determine Victory conditions.

Phase 1 – Choose Manoeuvres

Both players plan out their turn, deciding upon the manoeuvres that their eligible aircraft will perform from the available Ace Manoeuvres. Aircraft that are in a Spin are not eligible to move in this Movement phase and cannot perform an Ace Manoeuvre.

Once an Ace Manoeuvre has been chosen for an aircraft, place a Manoeuvre token showing the appropriate number face-down next to the model's base, taking care to keep the Ace Manoeuvre chosen a secret from opponents at this stage. Players must choose an Ace Manoeuvre for every eligible aircraft in their force and place a Manoeuvre token for each. Where an Ace Manoeuvre includes options such as whether the aircraft can turn left or right, or choose from various final facings after the manoeuvre is complete, this is decided when it comes to the Movement phase.

Every aircraft needs an Ace Manoeuvre for each turn, unless it is in a Spin and therefore not eligible to move. However, if for some reason an aircraft is forgotten and not given an Ace Manoeuvre, or an aircraft is given an Ace Manoeuvre it is not able to perform, that aircraft will fly straight ahead at its current speed, without adjusting Speed or Altitude.

Phase 2 – Initiative

This phase determines which player holds the initiative for this turn. Each player rolls a D6. The player that rolls the highest wins the initiative, and for the remainder of this turn they will be able to make the first Tailing Fire shots and will choose which side must move and will get to shoot first. All of which can be very important!

If the roll is a tie, re-roll the dice until one side wins the initiative.

Note that once the dice is rolled for initiative, players cannot go back and change any Ace Manoeuvres chosen in the previous phase!

Phase 3 – Tailing Fire

Starting with the player that won the initiative, players may choose an aircraft that is in a Tailing position (see page 30) to fire at the tailed aircraft. This phase allows an aircraft that has manoeuvred into a Tailing position to make use of this advantage before the enemy is able

to move away and shake its pursuer loose, effectively granting a bonus Firing phase to Tailing aircraft.

Tailing fire is resolved just like normal Air-to-Air fire and ammunition is expended as normal (see **page 21**). Players alternate choosing one of their Tailing aircraft and firing with it until all Tailing aircraft have fired. If one player has more aircraft able to fire in the Tailing Fire phase than the other, their remaining aircraft fire one after another in an order of their choosing once their opponent has fired with their last aircraft. When every eligible aircraft on the tabletop has fired, move on to the Movement phase.

Phase 4 – Movement

The player with the initiative decides which player will move an aircraft first. Once an aircraft has been chosen to move, its Manoeuvre token is turned over, revealing which Ace Manoeuvre it will make. Once the first aircraft has been moved, play switches to the other player who will choose an aircraft, turn over its Manoeuvre token, and then move the aircraft. Play continues in this fashion until all aircraft have been moved. If one player has more aircraft to move than the other, their remaining aircraft are moved one after another in an order of their choosing once their opponent has moved their last aircraft. When every eligible aircraft on the tabletop has been moved, move on to the Firing phase.

The Movement phase is covered in greater detail on **page 15**.

Phase 5 – Firing

The player that moved an aircraft first in the Movement phase will also now fire first with one of their aircraft in the Firing phase.

Once firing with the first aircraft has been fully resolved, players alternate choosing aircraft under their control, firing with each until all eligible aircraft have fired. As with movement, if one player has more aircraft to fire with than the other, their remaining aircraft will fire one after another in an order of their choosing once their opponent has fired with their last eligible aircraft. When every eligible aircraft on the tabletop has fired, move on to the End phase.

The Firing phase is covered in greater detail on **pages 20-28**.

Phase 6 – End Phase

During the End phase, a number of actions are resolved. Players determine if any of their aircraft that Stalled during the Movement phase of this turn can attempt to regain control and avoid falling into a Spin. Any aircraft which went into a Spin in a previous turn can attempt to remedy their situation before they crash into the ground. Also, both players determine if any of their aircraft are in a tailing position and able to fire during the Tailing Fire phase of the next turn.

Finally, this is the point where players determine if either side is forced to disengage due to losses triggering the Disengagement turn. Alternatively, if it is the final turn of the game then players work out Victory points and determine the winner.

The End phase is covered in greater detail on **page 29**.



MOVEMENT

During the Movement phase, aircraft manoeuvre into position to bring their targets into their sights – whether diving low to make strafing runs or powering up high to intercept enemy bombers, predicting the enemy's movements and manoeuvring to intercept is vital, and a skill that sets apart ace pilots from the crowd. Such is the speed of aerial combat that a pilot must always seek to attack where the target is expected to be, rather than where the target currently is.

THE MOVEMENT PHASE SEQUENCE

The Movement phase is split into the sequence of steps that follows. Each player should run through this sequence in full as they move one of their aircraft, before play passes to their opponent to choose and move one of their own aircraft. If one player has more aircraft to move than the other, their remaining aircraft are moved one after another in an order of their choosing once their opponent has moved their last aircraft. When every aircraft on the tabletop has been moved, the Movement phase ends.

The player with the initiative will decide which player goes first in the Movement phase, opting to move one of their own aircraft or making their opponent move an aircraft first.

Each aircraft follows the same sequence:

1. Throttle: Use the aircraft's Throttle characteristic to adjust the Speed of the aircraft for this turn. Speed dictates how far an aircraft must move and if not carefully managed may result in the aircraft failing to execute an Ace Manoeuvre safely or leaving the Area of Engagement entirely.

2. Move and Manoeuvre: Move the aircraft using the Ace Manoeuvres diagrams (see [page 96](#)) as a guide – the distance between each stage of the manoeuvre can vary depending upon the Speed at which the aircraft is travelling.

3. Adjust Altitude: After an aircraft has completed its movement, it can adjust its Altitude to represent the aircraft climbing or diving as it manoeuvres.

THROTTLE

Each aircraft has a Throttle value; this allows the aircraft to accelerate or decelerate before it moves. The Throttle step comes at the start of an aircraft's Movement phase. An aircraft can increase or decrease its Speed by an amount less than or equal to its Throttle value. For example, an aircraft with Throttle 2 may increase or decrease its Speed by 1 or 2, but not by more. After using Throttle, an aircraft's Speed is set for the remainder of the turn, unless it later climbs or dives, which will modify its Speed again at the end of the Movement phase (see [page 18](#)). An aircraft may not use its Throttle to safely increase its Speed above its Max Speed or to decrease its Speed below its Min Speed. An aircraft is not obliged to use its Throttle and may choose to maintain its current Speed, which can never be either below its Min Speed or above its Max Speed.

Certain Ace Manoeuvres require more Speed to perform, whilst climbing or diving might force an aircraft briefly above its Max Speed or below its Min Speed, so it is important to carefully manage an aircraft's Throttle at the start of every Movement phase to avoid disaster later on.

SPEED

An aircraft's Speed is recorded using the Speed Dial on the model's base, with each increment being 1 point of Speed. An aircraft must move one hex on the grid per point of Speed. It must move the full distance for the Speed indicated (after acceleration or deceleration during the Throttle step, as described above). An aircraft cannot move less. For example, an aircraft that is travelling at Speed 6 must move six hexes during its Move & Manoeuvre step. It cannot move less.

Minimum Speed

Each aircraft has a Min Speed value which it cannot fall below by using its Throttle, but which it may attempt to fall below as a result of climbing. If an aircraft ever attempts to fall below its Max Speed, it will Stall (see [page 18](#)) and risks falling into a Spin (see [page 30](#)).

Maximum Speed

Each aircraft has a Max Speed value which it cannot exceed by using its Throttle, but which it may attempt to exceed as a result of diving. If an aircraft ever attempts to exceed its Max Speed, it risks Breaking Up (see page 19).

Note here that in both cases, Min Speed and Max Speed, player error is a factor, and should a player misjudge an aircraft's Speed, adjusting the Speed dial above the maximum or below the minimum allowed for that aircraft, they must deal with the consequences!

Speed 0 – Hovering

Some aircraft have a Min Speed of 0, this means they can Hover in a stationary position. Such an aircraft will automatically Hover should its Speed be reduced to 0 for any reason. If an aircraft with a Min Speed of 0 wishes to Hover, it must reduce its Speed to 0 during the Throttle step of the Movement phase; doing so will mean that the aircraft is Hovering during the Move & Manoeuvre step of the Movement phase, regardless of any Ace Manoeuvres chosen during the Choose Manoeuvres phase. Simply discard the Manoeuvre token and do not make the chosen Ace Manoeuvre.

Whilst at Speed 0, the aircraft does not move and is not obliged to choose an Ace Manoeuvre. It may, however, turn to face any direction during the Move & Manoeuvre step of the Movement phase.

If a Hovering aircraft wishes to move off again, it must have chosen an Ace Manoeuvre during the Choose Manoeuvres phase and must adjust its Speed during the Throttle step of the Movement phase accordingly. If no Ace Manoeuvre has been chosen, a Hovering aircraft may not adjust its Speed.

MOVE AND MANOEUVRE

In Aeronautica Imperialis, aircraft bank, side-slip, roll and perform other manoeuvres as determined by the Ace Manoeuvres. There are eight such manoeuvres, named accordingly and numbered from 1 to 8 for ease, shown on the Ace Manoeuvres reference sheets and on page 96 of this book. These cover a range of options from the very simple to the highly complex, with 1 being the most simple and 8 being the most complex.

The Ace Manoeuvres an aircraft can attempt are dictated by its Ace Manoeuvres characteristic.

As previously described, at the start of each turn, during the Choose Manoeuvres phase, players choose which Ace Manoeuvre each aircraft they control will use to perform a manoeuvre from those available to it. A Manoeuvre token showing the number of the Ace Manoeuvre chosen for the aircraft is placed face-down either next to or on the model's base during the Choose Manoeuvres phase.

During the Move & Manoeuvre step of the Movement phase, when the aircraft is chosen to move, this token is turned over, revealing the aircraft's planned Ace Manoeuvre. This is then performed as described below:

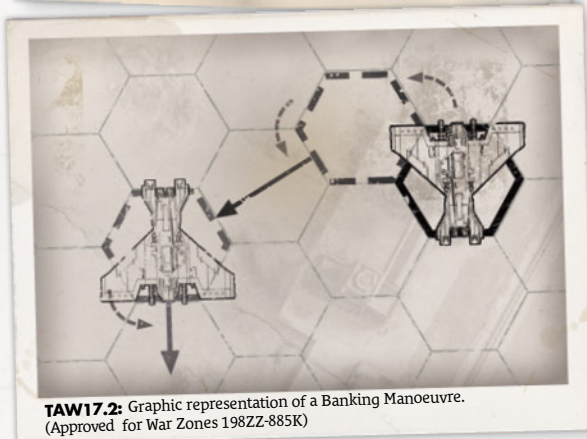
1. Choose Direction: Several Ace Manoeuvres show the aircraft moving to its left or right from its starting position. The controlling player is free to choose in which direction the aircraft will move. If the chosen Ace Manoeuvre only shows the aircraft moving forward from its starting position, the aircraft must move forward.

2. Movement: Once the direction that the aircraft is moving in has been decided, the controlling player is free to choose how many points of Speed the aircraft will use to move in that direction before the Manoeuvre part of the step. Each point of Speed is equal to one hex. The aircraft does not have to use all of its points of Speed to move between its starting position and the hex in which it performs a manoeuvre, but it must move at least one hex. Unspent points of Speed must be used after the Ace Manoeuvre has been completed (see 5. Remaining Movement opposite).

3. Manoeuvre: Once an aircraft has moved at least one hex from its starting position, the controlling player may have to change its facing, thus performing a manoeuvre. Some Ace Manoeuvres allow the aircraft a choice of facing here, shown by several arrows, but other Ace Manoeuvres do not give a choice, showing only one arrow. The aircraft must turn so that its Front Arc faces the direction shown by one of these arrows.

4. Repeat: Some of the Ace Manoeuvres consist of two stages of movement and manoeuvre. If one of these is being performed, the aircraft repeats the process, moving at least one hex before its first manoeuvre and then moving at least one more hex before manoeuvring again into its final facing.

E.g., an aircraft travelling at Speed 3 is performing Ace Manoeuvre 7, a manoeuvre consisting of two moves and manoeuvres before its final facing is chosen. From its starting position it uses 1 point of Speed to move one hex forward and to the left. It then performs a manoeuvre, turning to the left and uses two points of Speed to move two hexes before choosing its final facing, thus completing the Ace Manoeuvre.



5. Remaining Movement: If an aircraft has not moved a number of hexes equal to its current Speed, it must now do so. For instance, if the aircraft in the previous example had been travelling at Speed 4, it would have completed its Ace Manoeuvre as described, but would then be obliged to move forward one more hex to use its remaining movement.

If, for any reason, an aircraft cannot complete its chosen Ace Manoeuvre, for example, if the aircraft did not use sufficient Throttle and is travelling too slowly, it will Stall.

6. Occupied Hexes: Should a moving aircraft ever end its movement in a hex occupied by another aircraft, the moving aircraft will continue moving in the same direction until it reaches the first unoccupied hex. Once the moving aircraft has ended its movement, roll a D6 for each occupied hex the aircraft has moved through in this way. On a 2+, nothing happens. However, for each roll of a 1, the pilot has pushed their engines too hard and the aircraft will immediately suffer one damaging hit (see **page 23**). After which (and if the aircraft still has Structure points remaining) the aircraft will turn to face a randomly determined direction. To determine this direction, number the sides of the base of the aircraft and roll a D6. The aircraft is then turned until its Front Arc is facing the direction indicated by the result of the roll.

Should an aircraft end its movement in a hex occupied by a Ground Defence, a ground target, or anything else that makes placing the aircraft's base difficult, the obstruction may be temporarily moved aside and replaced once the aircraft has moved. Should a Ground Defence be required to fire whilst its hex is occupied by an aircraft, it can still do so as normal even if the miniature has been temporarily moved aside.

THE EDGE OF THE AREA OF ENGAGEMENT

If an aircraft's movement takes it beyond the edge of the Area of Engagement or into an incomplete hex at the edge of the Area of Engagement, the aircraft Disengages immediately and may not return to the game. There are several ways in which this can happen:

Accidental Disengagement

It may happen that an aircraft moves beyond the edge of the Area of Engagement during a manoeuvre. Most often this occurs accidentally during the Movement phase as the result of travelling at too high a Speed, or when a player misjudges an Ace Manoeuvre.

If an aircraft moves beyond the edge of the Area of Engagement or into an incomplete hex at the edge of the Area of Engagement during the Movement phase of any turn other than the Disengagement turn (see **page 31**), that aircraft counts as having Accidentally Disengaged when calculating Victory points.

Voluntary Disengagement

Players may voluntarily manoeuvre an aircraft out of the Area of Engagement during the Disengagement turn (see **page 31**) in order to deny their opponent Victory points for damaged aircraft. If an aircraft crosses the edge of the Area of Engagement in any other circumstances, it counts as having Accidentally Disengaged.

ADJUST ALTITUDE

Altitude represents the height an aircraft is above the ground. Like Speed, Altitude is recorded by using the model's Altitude dial on the model's base. 0 is ground level, only a landed aircraft can safely be at Altitude 0. Should an aircraft fall to Altitude 0 as the result of a Spin or as the result of a miscalculated dive, it may crash (see below). Otherwise, an aircraft can travel at an Altitude level between 1 and 5 (1 being the minimum Altitude for all aircraft) as determined by its Max Altitude characteristic. Altitude is important as an aircraft must be at a similar Altitude to an enemy aircraft to be able to fire at it in the Shooting phase and, as mentioned, to determine if an aircraft in a Spin crashes into the ground.

Aircraft can adjust their Altitude based on their current Speed after completing an Ace Manoeuvre and movement. Aircraft may attempt to exceed their Max Altitude, or even to climb beyond Altitude 5, but making such an attempt will cause them to Stall rather than climb and risk falling into a Spin. Doing so is extremely dangerous but it may prove a risk worth taking to avoid enemy fire.

Designer's Note – Altitude

The numbers that represent Altitude are somewhat abstract; 1 might equal 100 metres or 1 kilometre, it doesn't really matter, although some players may wish to agree amongst themselves what the numbers represent. Doing so can add considerably to the narrative experience of a game of Aeronautica Imperialis.

Climbing

Climbing after performing an Ace Manoeuvre will slow an aircraft down. This is represented in the game as follows:

If at the end of the Move & Manoeuvre step of the Movement phase, an aircraft climbs to increase its Altitude, its Speed will be reduced by 1. Adjust the Speed dial on the model's base accordingly.

The faster an aircraft is travelling, the better able it is to climb. This is represented as follows:

Speed 1-4: An aircraft may increase its Altitude by 1.

Speed 5-9: An aircraft may increase its Altitude by 1 or 2.

Stalling

Should an aircraft ever attempt to climb above its Max Altitude characteristic, above Altitude 5, or should an attempt to climb cause the aircraft to reduce its Speed below its Min Speed characteristic, for any reason, including player error, it will Stall rather than climb and risks falling into a Spin (see page 30). A Stall token is placed beside the model on the tabletop as a reminder that, during the End phase, the aircraft must attempt to recover or it will fall into a Spin.

Note that aircraft with a Min Speed characteristic of 0 are able to Hover (see page 16), and so cannot Stall due to falling below their Min Speed characteristic and do not risk going into a Spin. Instead, they will simply Hover at their current Altitude until the next turn. However, it must also be noted that aircraft with a Min Speed of 0 cannot Stall to avoid enemy fire!

Diving

Diving after performing an Ace Manoeuvre will cause an aircraft to increase its Speed and may briefly allow it to exceed its Max Speed. This is represented in the game as follows:

If at the end of the Move & Manoeuvre step of the Movement phase an aircraft dives to decrease its Altitude, its Speed will be increased by 1. Adjust the Speed dial on the model's base accordingly.

The faster an aircraft is travelling, the more able to dive it is. This is represented as follows:

Speed 1-4: An aircraft may decrease its Altitude by 1.

Speed 5-9: An aircraft may decrease its Altitude by 1 or 2.

Crashing

Should an attempt to dive reduce an aircraft's Altitude to 0 for any reason, including player error, it risks crashing into the ground and being destroyed. Roll a D6. On a 3+, the pilot is able to recover safely. On a 1 or 2, however, the pilot is unable to pull out of the dive and the aircraft crashes into the ground. All remaining Structure points are lost and the aircraft is immediately removed from play.

If the aircraft avoids crashing, it will remain at Altitude 1 with its Speed increased for diving as described above. Should this increase the aircraft's Speed above its Max Speed, it still runs the risk of Breaking Up.

Breaking Up

Should a diving aircraft ever attempt to exceed its Max Speed characteristic for any reason, including player error, it risks Breaking Up. Roll a D6. On a 3+, the aircraft is able to withstand the stresses of high speed and the pilot is able to recover safely. On a 1 or 2, however, the aircraft suffers a catastrophic failure and immediately suffers one damaging hit (see [page 23](#)).

If Breaking Up is avoided, or if the aircraft still has Structure points remaining, the aircraft's Altitude is reduced for diving as described previously, to a minimum of Altitude 1, and the Speed dial will remain at the Max Speed of the aircraft.

Designer's Note – Stalling and Diving

Stall and Spin tokens are included to help make it abundantly clear that an aircraft has Stalled or is plummeting towards the ground. However, a feature of the models that we made great use of during playtesting is that they twist and rotate atop their bases. Players may wish to do the same as us; pointing an aircraft's nose upwards when it is Stalled, or downwards when it is in a Spin. It certainly adds to the visual appeal of the game!

SPECIAL MANOEUVRES

Any aircraft may attempt to perform the following Special Manoeuvres during the Movement phase, provided the relevant criteria are met:

LANDING

Any aircraft can land during a game of Aeronautica Imperialis. Although very risky to do so whilst under enemy fire, transport aircraft may be required to land in a landing zone in order to drop off troops, as required by some of the scenarios.

To land, the aircraft must choose Ace Manoeuvre 1 during the Choose Manoeuvres phase, must be at Altitude 1 and must be travelling at its minimum Speed after the Throttle step of the Movement phase. If these criteria are met, when chosen during the Move and Manoeuvre step of the Movement phase the aircraft is able to land at the end of its movement. Reduce both its Altitude and Speed to 0. Landed aircraft cannot fire any weapons during the Firing phase. Whilst landed, aircraft are vulnerable to Air-to-Ground fire as if they were Ground Defences.

TAXIING

While landed, an aircraft may taxi to manoeuvre into a better position or to move into a landing zone. A taxiing aircraft moves at Speed 1 and may change its facing freely before and after moving.

TAKING OFF

To take off, a landed aircraft with Altitude and Speed set to 0 must choose Ace Manoeuvre 1 during the Choose Manoeuvres phase. When chosen during the Move and Manoeuvre step of the Movement phase, it sets its Speed to its Min Speed characteristic before completing its movement and setting its Altitude to 1.

The aircraft may not fire in the Firing phase of the turn in which it took off, but may do so in subsequent turns. In subsequent turns, the aircraft follows all of the normal rules.

FIRING

In the Firing phase, aircraft unleash their weapons upon their targets. Cannon and heavy machine guns blaze, rockets and missiles streak through the skies, bombs are dropped and flak storms fill the skies with deadly barrages, all in an effort to bring down enemy aircraft.

THE FIRING PHASE SEQUENCE

The player that moved first in the Movement phase will also choose an aircraft and fire first in the Firing phase. The Firing phase is split into a sequence of steps. Each player should follow these steps for each eligible aircraft in their force.

Once firing with the first aircraft has been fully resolved, players then alternate choosing aircraft under their control, firing with each until all eligible aircraft have fired. As with movement, if one player has more aircraft to fire with than the other, their remaining aircraft will fire one after another in an order of their choosing once their opponent has fired with their last eligible aircraft.

All aircraft follow the same sequence of steps when firing:

- 1. Targeting:** Players select targets for the aircraft to fire upon and determine if they are able to do so, checking Fire Arcs and Range.
- 2. Firepower:** Players determine how many Firepower dice are rolled and the score required to hit on each dice, and then roll to hit the target.
- 3. Ammo:** If the weapon has an Ammo characteristic of 1, 2 or 3, reduce the Ammo characteristic by 1 every time the weapon is fired.
- 4. Damage:** If any hits were scored on the Firepower dice, these dice are rolled again as Damage dice to determine if the target suffers any damaging hits which will cause it to lose Structure points.



AIR-TO-AIR FIRE

Air-to-Air firing is aircraft firing at other aircraft, in other words, both firer and target are airborne, travelling at Altitude 1 or above. This is by far the most common form of firing in Aeronautica Imperialis. The following rules apply not only during the Firing phase, but also during the Tailing Fire phase (see **page 13**) and should be followed in both phases.

TARGETING

In order for an enemy aircraft to be targeted, it must meet certain criteria: it must be within the weapon's Fire Arc and within range of the firing aircraft. If the target is at a different Altitude to the firing aircraft, it may be targeted but will be harder or impossible to hit. Aircraft that are Stalled or in a Spin may also be targeted but will also be harder or even impossible to hit.

Fire Arcs

Aircraft weapons are limited to targeting enemy aircraft and firing only into the Fire Arc in which they face. Each aircraft entry in the Squadron Lists section details the Fire Arcs into which an aircraft's weapons face. For ease of play, Fire Arcs are marked on the aircraft's base, and it is important to note that Fire Arcs are always determined by the position of the aircraft's base rather than the position of the model, as it is possible for models to twist and rotate atop their bases.

An aircraft may target only one enemy aircraft within each Fire Arc, even if there are several enemy aircraft within the same Fire Arc. In other words, aircraft which have multiple weapons that fire into the same Fire Arc must fire all of them at the same target.

If an aircraft has weapons that face into different Fire Arcs, it may target one enemy aircraft in each Fire Arc it can fire into – allowing it to target multiple enemy aircraft – provided each target is in a different Fire Arc. For example, an Imperial Navy Marauder Bomber has a rear turret as well as forward facing lascannon, so could fire at one enemy aircraft in its Front Fire Arc, and one enemy aircraft in its Rear Fire Arc.

It may happen that an aircraft is within two Fire Arcs of an enemy aircraft at the same time, the hex it occupies being intersected by the line between the firing aircraft's different Fire Arcs. In this case, if the firing aircraft has weapons that face into both of those Fire Arcs, they may all target the same enemy aircraft.

Fire Arcs are as follows (see **page 5** for diagram):

- **Front:** This is 60 degrees directly forwards of the aircraft's base.
- **Rear:** This is 60 degrees directly behind the aircraft's base.
- **Left Side:** This is 120 degrees to the left of the aircraft's base (in some rare cases this may be further split into Left Side – Front and Left Side – Rear).
- **Right Side:** This is 120 degrees to the right of the aircraft's base (in some rare cases this may be further split into Right Side – Front and Right Side – Rear).
- **All Round:** Some weapons can fire in 360 degrees, in other words, into every Fire Arc. Note, however, that such weapons will always be limited to firing Up or Down (as follows).
- **Up:** Means that this weapon may only target aircraft which are at the same Altitude level as this aircraft or above it.
- **Down:** Means that this weapon may only target aircraft which are at the same Altitude level as this aircraft or below it.

Directly Overhead

It is important to note, whilst discussing Fire Arcs, that it may sometimes happen that an aircraft occupies the same hex as a Ground Defence or a ground target. When this occurs, the aircraft is said to be Directly Overhead.

When an aircraft is Directly Overhead a ground target, it is still considered to be within the Ground Defence's All Round Fire Arc. Similarly, when an aircraft is Directly Overhead a Ground Defence or ground target, these are considered to be within the aircraft's Rear Fire Arc.

Range

As well as being in the weapon's Fire Arc, the target must also be in range. For all weapons there are three range bands: Short, Medium and Long range. The range between an aircraft and its target is always measured by counting hexes from the Fire Arc of the weapon being used for the attack, to the hex the target is in.

Ranges are:

Hexes	Range
1-4	Short range
5-7	Medium range
8-10	Long range

Not all weapons can fire at all ranges, some can only be fired at Short or Medium range, for example, whilst other weapons, such as anti-aircraft missiles, can only be fired at Long range. This information is provided in the Squadron Lists (see [page 72](#)).

FIREPOWER

All weapons have a Firepower characteristic for the three range bands described previously, detailed on their entry in the Squadron Lists. The first number is a weapon's Firepower at Short range, the second number is the weapon's Firepower at Medium range, and the third number is the weapon's Firepower at Long range.

A weapon's Firepower characteristic is the number of D6 rolled for that weapon when firing at that range. These D6 are referred to as Firepower dice.

For example, the Twin Lascannon on an Imperial Navy Lightning have a Firepower characteristic of 0-2-1, meaning that at Short range it cannot fire, at Medium range two D6 are rolled, and at Long range one dice is rolled.

Some weapons are more effective at longer ranges. This can be for a variety of reasons, be it targeting systems acquiring lock, the convergence of weapons systems meaning that they become more effective at longer range than close in, or an aircraft's manoeuvrability allowing it to stay on-target.

Roll to Hit

To determine if a firing weapon scores a hit on its target, roll the Firepower dice. The D6 roll which is required to hit a target with Air-to-Air fire is always 5+.

The following modifiers may also apply to the dice roll:

- -1 to the dice roll if the target has a Stall or Spin token on it.
- -1 to the dice roll per level of Altitude difference between the firing aircraft and its target.
- -1 to the dice roll if the firing aircraft has a Stall token on it.

Note that, as the above modifiers are cumulative, an aircraft cannot normally target another aircraft that is 2 or more Altitude levels above or below it.

Designer's Note – Stalling

It may seem counter-intuitive to many players to push an aircraft above its maximum Altitude or to slow it below its Min Speed, causing the engine to Stall and risking falling into a Spin, but for certain aircraft and at certain Altitudes this may be the best option to avoid enemy fire. The sudden and dramatic cessation of forward motion can confuse even the most sophisticated of targeting systems, and a pilot may decide to Stall engines and rely on the Handling characteristics of the aircraft to pull out of a Spin should their previous Ace Manoeuvres fail to get them out of the crosshairs!

AMMO

Whenever an aircraft fires a weapon, ammunition is expended, even if the weapon is found to be out of range when range is measured. How this works depends upon the Ammo characteristic of the weapon itself. Weapons with an Ammo characteristic of UL (unlimited) cannot run out of ammunition. Weapons with an Ammo characteristic of 1, 2 or 3 reduce the value each time they are fired. When such a weapon's Ammo characteristic is reduced to 0, the weapon may no longer be fired. For example, a weapon with Ammo 1 may only be fired once, as it is immediately reduced to Ammo 0, whereas a weapon with Ammo 3 may be fired three times before it is reduced to Ammo 0.

DAMAGE

Successful hits do not necessarily inflict damage; many shots will simply pass straight through an aircraft's lightweight frame without hitting anything important. Each Firepower dice that scores a hit must be rolled again, this time as a Damage dice. Each weapon has a Damage characteristic presented as the score required on the Damage dice to cause damage. For example, a weapon with a Damage characteristic of 4+ will cause damage on any of the Damage dice that roll a 4 or higher. Larger, more powerful weapons, are more likely to cause damage than smaller weapons.

Each successful Damage dice roll causes one damaging hit to the target, reducing its Structure points accordingly. When an aircraft has 0 Structure points remaining, it has been shot down and falls to the ground. Remove the aircraft from play.

SPECIAL SITUATION – TAILING

Tailing is the term used to describe the situation of one aircraft being directly behind an enemy aircraft. This is a very good position for an aircraft to be in, firstly because the majority of aircraft do not have weapons that face into their Rear Fire Arc and so most cannot return fire. Secondly, because a pilot is able to easily track the tailed aircraft, enabling them to bring huge amounts of firepower to bear in a short space of time.

This is represented in the game by the Tailing Fire phase. Whether an aircraft is Tailing or not is determined in the End phase (see **page 30**), as it does not have any direct bearing during the Movement or Firing phases. If during the End phase an aircraft is determined to be in a Tailing position, it will gain an extra chance to fire upon the tailed aircraft during the Tailing Fire phase of the following turn, before the tailed aircraft has the opportunity to pull off any evasive manoeuvres that will shake loose the Tailing aircraft.

Note, however, that an aircraft which is in a Spin cannot be tailed.



WEAPON SPECIAL RULES

Certain weapons have special rules, listed along with other characteristics in the Squadron Lists section. Weapons may have one or more special rules, in any combination, or none. This list of weapon special rules is by no means exhaustive, additional weapon special rules may be added in future supplements.

The weapon special rules are as follows:

Extra Damage (X+)

Some weapons are so powerful that they can cause more damage than most other weapons. If a weapon has the Extra Damage special rule, it will also have a number in brackets after it, for example, Extra Damage (5+). This will always be a higher number than the weapon's Damage characteristic.

When rolling the Damage dice, any rolls that equal or exceed the Extra Damage number will cause 2 Structure points to be lost by the target rather than the usual 1 Structure point.

For example, a lascannon has a Damage characteristic of 2+ and has the Extra Damage (6+) special rule. When rolling the Damage dice, a lascannon will cause the target to lose 1 Structure point on rolls of 2 or higher, but should any of the Damage dice roll a 6, that dice will cause the target to lose 2 Structure points.

Tail Gunner

Some weapons are fitted into the tail sections of aircraft, enabling them to return fire against enemy aircraft that have manoeuvred into a tailing position, giving them more protection from Tailing Fire.

Once per turn, when fired upon by an enemy aircraft in the Tailing Fire phase, an aircraft may immediately return fire with any weapons that have this special rule. This is resolved just like normal Air-to-Air fire and may be done even if the aircraft is destroyed, as it can be assumed that the Tail Gunner and the Tailing aircraft fire simultaneously.

Ground Attack

Some weapons are designed with the sole purpose of destroying ground targets, such as most bombs and certain missiles. Weapons with the Ground Attack special rule may only be used against ground targets during a Bombing Run (see **page 27**). A ground target is any Ground Defence, landed aircraft, or any ground target as described by a scenario – they can never be used to target anything at Altitude 1 or above.

Aerial Attack

Some weapons are only designed to be used against aerial targets, such as certain missiles and the majority of Ground Defence weapons. Weapons with the Aerial Attack special rule may only be used against targets at Altitude 1 or higher; they can never be used to target anything at Altitude 0 and cannot be used to make a Strafing Run (see **page 26**).

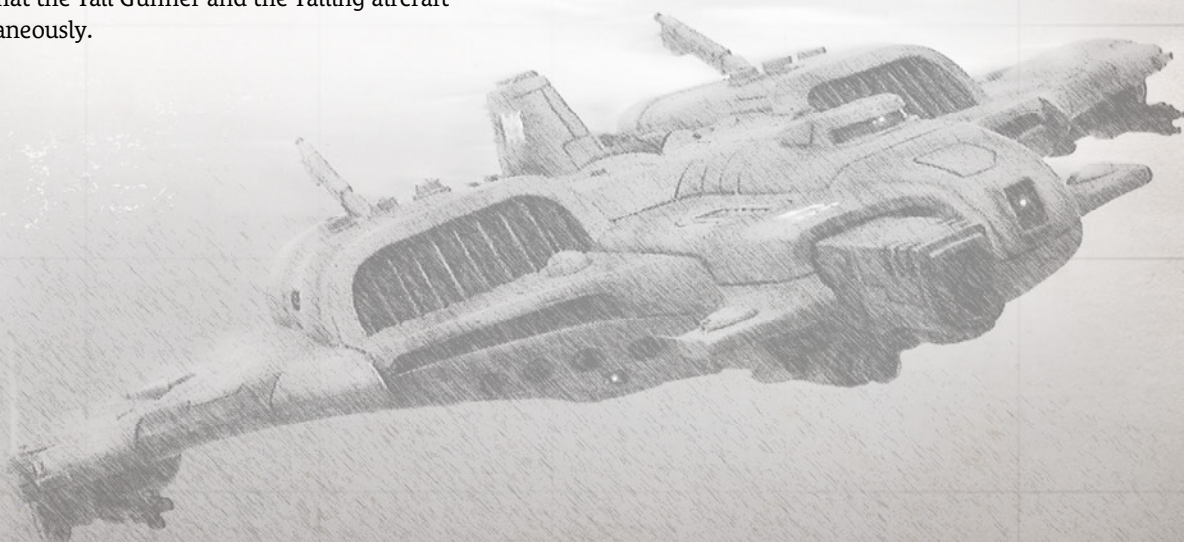
Ground-to-Air Fire

Weapons with this special rule can only be used at Altitude 0 and may only target aircraft at Altitude 1 or above. They cannot be used to target anything at Altitude 0 (see **page 28**).

Effective Altitude (X)

This special rule is only present in conjunction with the Ground-to-Air Fire rule (see above).

The number in brackets after the name of the rule represents the highest Altitude level at which such weapons are accurate. If an aircraft is travelling at an Altitude higher than the number shown, the chance of hitting is reduced (see **page 28**).

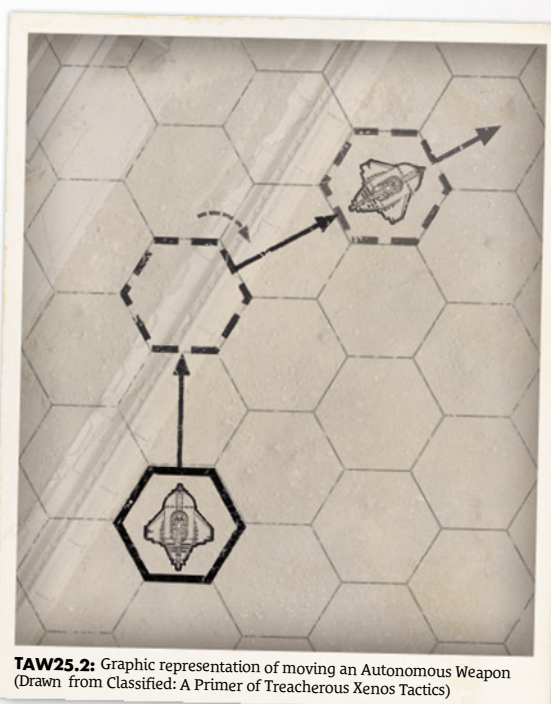


Autonomous Weapons

These are self-propelled guided missiles or bombs, capable of controlling their own flight path towards a target. They are deployed from an aircraft during the Firing phase when they are 'fired'. When fired, place a model representing the Autonomous weapon in a hex immediately adjacent to one of the Fire Arcs listed, as shown on the diagram. When fired, an Autonomous Weapon may choose its facing, as shown by the arrows in the diagram below. The firing aircraft may place a maximum of two Autonomous weapons in this way during a single Firing phase. Firing an Autonomous weapon does not require a target.



Once deployed, the Autonomous weapon moves up to D3+3 hexes in a straight line directly away from the firing aircraft. From the next turn onwards, the Autonomous weapon will travel D3+3 hexes in the same direction at the end of each Movement phase, after all other aircraft have moved. During this movement, the Autonomous weapon may turn once to the left or right, as shown in the diagram below. Should the Autonomous weapon move beyond the edge of the Area of Engagement, it is removed from play.



If at the end of any Firing phase the Autonomous weapon occupies a hex adjacent to one or more other aircraft, roll a D6. On a 2+, the Autonomous weapon has hit one adjacent aircraft, chosen by the player controlling the Autonomous weapon. Roll one Damage dice against the hit aircraft, as described on page 23, after which the Autonomous Weapon is removed from play. On a 1, however, the Autonomous weapon misses and will continue to fly in the next turn. Note that Autonomous weapons are able to climb and dive extremely rapidly. Therefore, Autonomous aircraft ignore the Altitude of other aircraft when making this roll.

AIR-TO-GROUND FIRE

This section covers aircraft targeting anything on the ground. This could be anything at Altitude 0, be it Ground Defences such as flak guns and anti-aircraft emplacements, ground targets such as enemy bunkers, vehicles or buildings, or any landed aircraft and so on.

GROUND ATTACKS

There are two types of ground attack an aircraft can make – Strafing Runs and Bombing Runs:

- Any aircraft can make a Strafing Run unless it has a Stall token on it and provided its weapons do not have the Aerial Attack special rule.
- Only those aircraft that are equipped with weapons with the Ground Attack special rule can make Bombing Runs.

There are some rare exceptions to this which will be detailed in the Squadron Lists section.

Altitude 0 targets are fired at just like aerial ones, with the exception that aircraft equipped with weapons with the Ground Attack special rule can make a Bombing Run whilst simultaneously targeting other aircraft. This means, for example, that an Imperial Navy Marauder armed with Wing Bombs may fire at another aircraft as described on **page 21** and still make a Bombing Run against Altitude 0 targets. An aircraft making a Strafing Run, however, is focusing all of its attention against a ground target and may not target other aircraft in a different Fire Arc with other weapons during the same Firing phase.

Air-to-Ground firing follows the same sequence of steps as described for Air-to-Air fire (see **page 21**), with the following exceptions:

STRAFING RUN

A Strafing Run is the term given for a low-level attack made by any aircraft against ground targets, usually by Scouts or Fighters, but sometimes by Bombers.

Fire arcs and range for Air-to-Ground fire are determined during the Firing phase using the normal rules as described on **pages 21-22** for Air-to-Air fire. To perform a Strafing Run, an aircraft must be travelling at Altitude 1. Aircraft at Altitude 2 or higher may not perform a Strafing Run.

To Hit

To hit an Altitude 0 target during a Strafing Run, roll a number of Firepower dice equal to the Firepower characteristic of the weapon being used, as described on **page 22**.

The D6 roll required to hit an Altitude 0 target during a Strafing run is 5+.

Damage

For each hit scored, roll for damage as described on **page 23**, using the weapon's Damage characteristic and any applicable special rules (Extra Damage, for example).

As described previously, each successful Damage dice roll causes the target to lose 1 Structure point. When reduced to 0, the target is destroyed.

BOMBING RUN

A Bombing Run is a high-level attack used to saturate a target area with bombs or missiles. Only aircraft armed with weapons with the Ground Attack special rule may make a Bombing Run.

Fire arcs and range for Air-to-Ground fire are determined during the Firing phase using the normal rules as described on **pages 21-22** for Air-to-Air fire.

To Hit

Unlike Air-to-Air fire or Strafing Runs, the effectiveness of weapons with the Ground Attack special rule when used to make a Bombing Run will vary depending on the Altitude the aircraft is travelling at.

To hit an Altitude 0 target during a Bombing Run, roll a number of Firepower dice equal to the Firepower characteristic of the weapon being used, as described on **page 22**.

The D6 roll required to hit an Altitude 0 target during a Bombing run is 5+.

The following modifiers may also apply to the dice roll:

- +1 to the dice roll if there is only one level of Altitude difference between the firing aircraft and its target.
- -1 to the dice roll if there are three levels of Altitude difference between the firing aircraft and its target.
- -2 to the dice roll if there are four or more levels of Altitude difference between the firing aircraft and its target.

Bomb Creep

Of course, dropping bombs from high altitude is not a very exact art and the destruction caused by heavy Bombing Runs is rarely confined to a single target. After rolling one or more successful hits, roll a D6 for any other potential targets within a hex adjacent to the target of a Bombing Run that are at Altitude 0, be they friendly or enemy, Ground Defences or landed aircraft. On the roll of a 4+, they are also hit and caught in the storm of fire and shrapnel. Roll once for damage against targets hit by Bomb Creep as normal for the weapon, using its Damage characteristic.

Damage

For each hit scored, roll for damage as described on **page 23**, using the weapon's Damage characteristic and any applicable special rules (Extra Damage, for example).

As described previously, each successful Damage dice roll causes the target to lose 1 Structure point. When reduced to 0, the target is destroyed.



GROUND-TO-AIR FIRE

This covers Ground Defences firing at enemy aircraft with any of their weapons. Ground-to-Air fire is often commonly known as anti-aircraft fire, AA or flak. Ground targets in scenarios are often defended by formidable Ground-to-Air capable Ground Defences, and most races in the 41st Millennium have a variety of such weapons available.

A player may choose a Ground Defence to fire a Ground-to-Air weapon under their control as if it was another aircraft in their force. Therefore the Ground Defence may be chosen at any time during the Firing phase.

Ground-to-Air firing follows the same sequence of steps as described for Air-to-Air fire (see [page 21](#)), with the following exceptions:

TARGETING

Any weapon with the Ground-to-Air special rule can target a single enemy aircraft during the Firing phase, provided it is within the range of the weapon.

All Ground-to-Air weapons have an All Round Fire Arc.

To Hit

All Ground-to-Air weapons have a Firepower characteristic just like any other weapon, detailing the number of Firepower dice rolled at Short, Medium and Long range, as described on [page 22](#).

The D6 roll required to hit with any Ground-to-Air weapon is 5+.

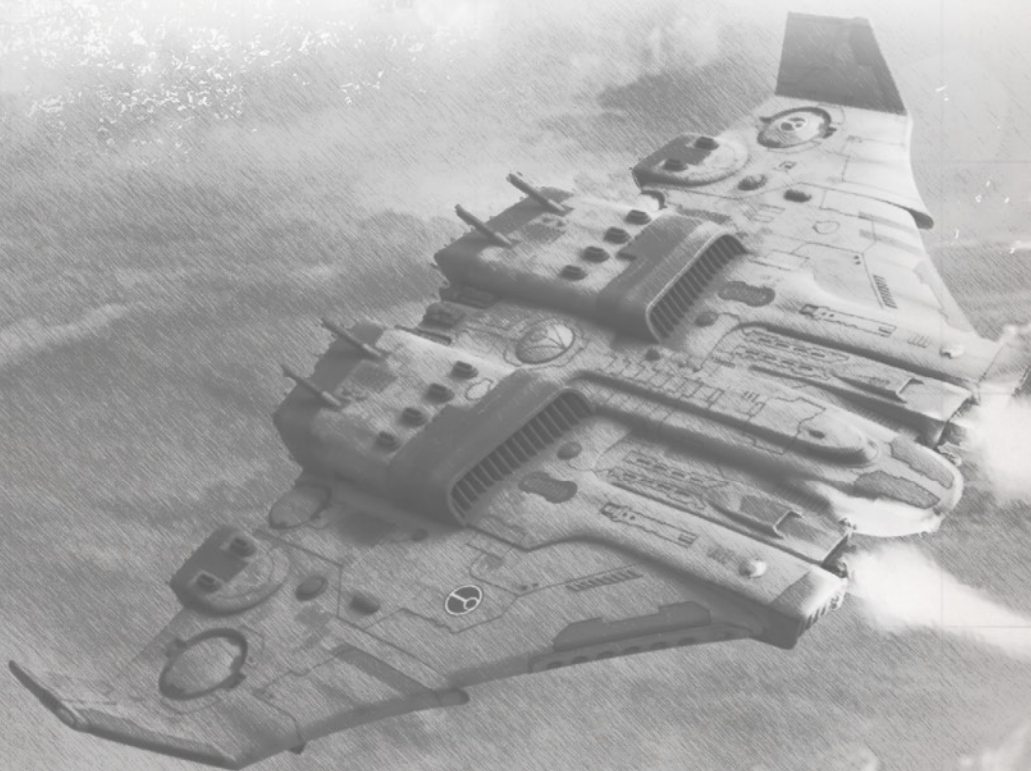
The following modifiers may also apply to the dice roll:

- -1 to the dice roll if the target has a Stall or Spin token on it.
- -1 to the dice roll per level of Altitude the target is above the firing weapon's Effective Altitude (X).

Damage

For each hit scored, roll for damage as described on [page 23](#), using the weapon's Damage characteristic and any applicable special rules (Extra Damage, for example).

As described previously, each successful Damage dice roll causes the target to lose 1 Structure point. When reduced to 0, the target is destroyed.



END PHASE

In the End phase, players determine whether some or all aircraft from either side must disengage, as it is very rare for a dogfight to last until all aircraft have been shot down; normally one side will suffer heavy casualties, run low on fuel or run low on ammo and be forced to fall back to avert disaster.

For those aircraft still in the fight, the End phase is where players attempt to avoid more immediate disaster, be it restarting a Stalled engine or pulling an aircraft out of a Spin.

THE END PHASE SEQUENCE

The End phase is split into a sequence of steps. Both players, starting with the player who holds the initiative, run through each step of this sequence for all of their aircraft, before moving on to the next step of the sequence.

1. Stalled Aircraft: Players attempt to recover any aircraft that Stalled during this turn. If they cannot, the aircraft will fall into a Spin.

2. Recovering from a Spin: If any aircraft fell into a Spin in a previous turn, players attempt to regain control before the aircraft crashes into the ground.

3. Determine Tailing: Players determine if any of their aircraft are in a position to fire on enemy aircraft in the Tailing Fire phase of the following turn.

Ending the Game

If this is the End phase of the final turn, or if only one player has aircraft left in the Area of Engagement, the game ends and players work out victory conditions.

Once the End phase sequence has been completed, the next turn begins unless, of course, the game has ended.

STALLED AIRCRAFT

If, for any reason, an aircraft has a Stall token on it, the controlling player can attempt to recover the aircraft before it falls into a Spin.

To recover an aircraft with a Stall token on it, roll a D6 and compare the result to the aircraft's Handling characteristic. If the result is equal to or higher than the aircraft's Handling characteristic, the aircraft has recovered from the Stall. When an aircraft recovers from a Stall:

- The aircraft's Speed is reduced by 1 (if possible), to a minimum of the aircraft's Min Speed characteristic.
- The aircraft's Altitude is reduced by 1 (if possible), to a minimum of Altitude 1.

In subsequent turns, the aircraft follows all of the normal rules.

If the result of the roll is lower than the aircraft's Handling characteristic, however, the aircraft does not recover and falls into a Spin. A Spin token is placed beside the model on the tabletop and in the next turn it will Spin, as follows. The player may not attempt to correct the Spin until the next End phase.

RECOVERING FROM A SPIN

Players now attempt to recover aircraft that have fallen into a Spin during a previous turn (not aircraft that have only just fallen into a Spin during this End phase).

Whilst in a Spin, an aircraft can do nothing else; it may not perform Ace Manoeuvres and may not fire, it simply falls towards the ground, reducing its Altitude by 1 in the End phase after attempting to recover, should it fail to do so.

To recover an aircraft with a Spin token on it, roll a D6 and compare the result to the aircraft's Handling characteristic. If the result is equal to or higher than the aircraft's Handling characteristic, the aircraft has recovered from the Spin. When an aircraft recovers from a Spin:

- Regardless of the Speed the aircraft was travelling at before it fell into a Spin, its Speed dial is set to match its Max Speed characteristic.
- The aircraft's Altitude is reduced by 1, to a minimum of Altitude 1.
- The aircraft's facing is randomly determined. To do this, number the sides of the base of the aircraft and roll a D6. The aircraft is then turned until its Front Arc is facing the direction indicated by the result of the roll.

In subsequent turns, the aircraft follows all of the normal rules.

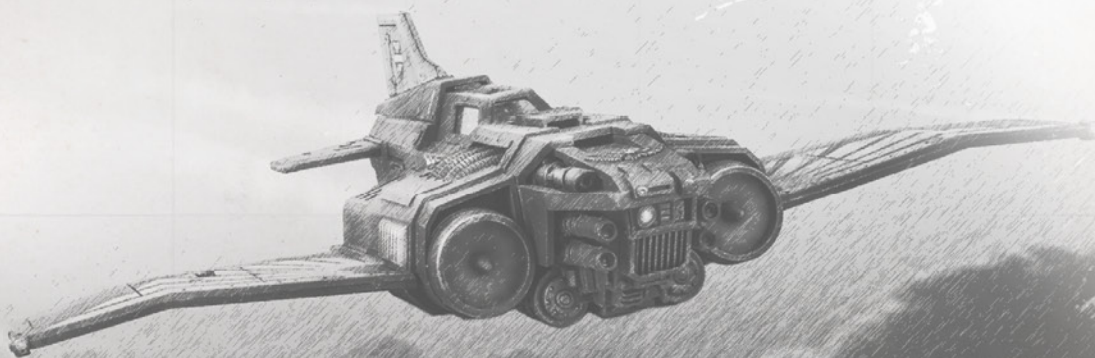
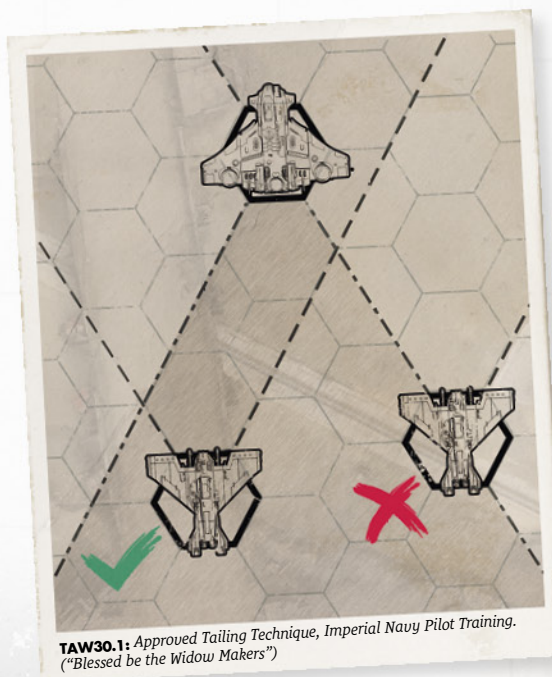
If the result of the roll is lower than the aircraft's Handling characteristic, however, the aircraft does not recover and continues to Spin, immediately reducing its Altitude by 1. If the aircraft's Altitude dial is reduced to 0, it crashes to the ground. All remaining Structure points are lost and the aircraft is immediately removed from play. Otherwise, the aircraft may attempt again to recover from the Spin in the next End phase.

TAILING

During the final step of the End phase, players determine if any of their aircraft are in position to make use of the Tailing Fire phase of the next turn.

To be in a Tailing position, the Tailing aircraft must have its target within its Front Arc whilst simultaneously being wholly within the target's Rear Arc, must be within Short or Medium range of its target and must be at the same Altitude or at one Altitude level above or below it. If all of these criteria are met, the tailing aircraft may then fire at the tailed aircraft during the Tailing Fire phase of the next turn (see page 13).

Players may wish to place a Tailing token next to the Tailing aircraft as a reminder that it can fire during the Tailing Fire phase of the following turn.



ENDING THE GAME

There are several ways to determine if the game ends, and several ways to determine the winner once the game has ended. These are as follows:

FUEL LIMIT

Aerial combat rarely lasts for prolonged periods of time due to the ammo limitations of the aircraft involved and how quickly they burn through fuel reserves when pushed to the limits of their performance. Consequently, turn 12 of any game is always the final turn, regardless of any other considerations detailed below, at which point both sides must disengage. Fuel limit will never make a game last longer than 12 turns, but may cause it to end on an earlier turn. At the end of turn 12, Victory points are worked out as described below.

LAST AIRCRAFT FLYING

Should it ever happen that only one player has any aircraft left in the Area of Engagement for any reason, the game automatically ends. Victory points are worked out as described below.

INSURMOUNTABLE LOSSES

If one force finds itself reduced to 25% of its starting numbers or below, rounding fractions down, only one more turn may be played, regardless of how many turns have been played. This is called the Disengagement turn.

Disengagement Turn

During the Disengagement turn, both players attempt to secure any mission objectives possible as described in the scenario they are playing, or attempt to Voluntarily Disengage by manoeuvring aircraft under their control so that they cross the edge of the Area of Engagement and Disengage, thus reducing the Victory points they may concede to their opponent.

Note that if an aircraft crosses the edge of the Area of Engagement during the Movement phase of any turn other than the Disengagement turn, it counts as having Accidentally Disengaged when calculating Victory points.

VICTORY POINTS

Victory points are used to determine how well each player has done and who has won the game. Players score Victory points by causing damage and reducing the Structure points of enemy aircraft, for destroying enemy aircraft and, in some scenarios, for safely

delivering troops into a landing zone. Certain scenarios will award Victory points for completing specific mission objectives as well, such as damaging or destroying unique ground targets.

Victory Points for Aircraft

Victory points for aircraft are calculated as a percentage of the aircraft's total points cost, including extra points spent on additional weapons.

Enemy aircraft that are reduced to 0 Structure points and removed from play are worth 100% of their points cost, for example, whereas undamaged enemy aircraft that have Voluntarily Disengaged are worth 0% of their cost – see the Victory Points chart below:

AIRCRAFT DESTROYED	
100%	
AIRCRAFT STILL OPERATING WITHIN AREA OF ENGAGEMENT	
UNDAMAGED 0%	DAMAGED 50%
AIRCRAFT VOLUNTARILY DISENGAGED	
UNDAMAGED 0%	DAMAGED 25%
AIRCRAFT ACCIDENTALLY DISENGAGED	
UNDAMAGED 100%	DAMAGED 100%

All fractions are rounded up when calculating the Victory points for a single aircraft. For example, 50% of 25 Victory points equals 13 Victory points.

Points Difference

If one force is of a lower points value than its opponent, the difference is awarded to the player with the higher points value as Victory points at the end of the game. For example, if, at the start of the game, one player's force is worth 150 points, but their opponent's force is only worth 146 points, the player with the 150 point force is awarded 4 Victory points in addition to any won by other means.

WINNING

The player that scores the most Victory points wins the game. The greater the difference in Victory points, the greater the victory!

BROKEN HILLS
OUTPOST

THE AIR WAR OVER TAROS

The world of Taros lies within the Ultima Segmentum, and has been home to humans since long before the Imperium of Mankind united the stars. An arid mining world, Taros toiled loyally in the service of the Adeptus Terra for thousands of years, its desert people content to plunder their planet's rich mineral wealth in exchange for the protection of Terra and the privilege of serving the Emperor. And yet beneath this veneer of loyalty, treacherous forces were at work. When it was discovered that Lord Uphir Aulis, the planetary governor of Taros, was trading with the alien T'au Empire, the Imperium's response was swift and brutal.



LZ GAMMA
DROOKIAN 111

TAROSKEEM /
TAROS

EM-SAT

*It's not clear why the
aliens are dug in on the
Phyyra Heights, the 11th
Dookian Infantry division
is ordered to advance into the
area to find out.*

THE WAR FOR TAROS

The first battle between the Imperium of Mankind and the T'au Empire on Taros took place in 997.M41, though in hindsight this would be but a prelude to the greater conflict to come. Hostilities began when a strike force of Avenging Sons Space Marines were dispatched to kill Aulis, and install a planetary governor loyal to the Imperium. Much to their surprise, the T'au had already sent forces to defend their interests on the planet, and the Space Marines were unable to complete their mission. A year later, Taros felt the full might of the Imperium as the 4621st Imperial Guard Army launched a full scale planetary invasion. The bitter fighting that followed revealed a T'au presence far greater than the Imperial command structure had expected, as unknown to the Imperium, Taros had been absorbed by the Ksi'm'yen Sept as part of the T'au Empire's Third Sphere Expansion. Taros was not merely an allied world of the T'au, but had become a part of their empire, renamed by the xenos as T'ros.

Through the cunning of alien commanders, and the advanced technology of the T'au, the 4621st Imperial Guard Army was expelled from T'ros, its warriors and ships retreating into the void. Of course, the Imperium does not forget, nor does it forgive.

IMPERIAL PLANETARY SURVEY

Name: Taros [Mining world] *Xenos Extremis*

Cross ref. The Galaxy: Imperium Files 233-6376 0198.884.14 ref 2323.89

Location: Taros System/Kayon Sector/Ultima Segmentum

Cluster: Hexamere212 | Attitude: VH-112/HS+87

Distance from Terra: 34,550 k-1

Primary Type: A6-Y

Orbital Bodies: 6 Major Celestial Bodies - 1: B-class 1: K1-class, 2: F1-class, 2: Secondaries

Graviometrics: 1*D54/>4

Population: 12,000,000

Planetary Governor: Lord Uphir Aulis



Tithe Grade: | Aptus Non

Aestimare: D115

Principal Export: High Grade Ores (cf 'Iron Clans' Cross ref. Vanadium/Rhenium 77301538.2587ki) [REDACTED].

Principal Imports: Water (cf. Aqua Terra 301.738.961 ref 564-840.). [REDACTED] Abhuman Labour (cf. Ogryn Mining Divisions)

Notes: It is believed Taros was made habitable by means of terraforming at some point during the Dark Age of Technology. This process cleansed the atmosphere, rendering it breathable for humans and also created two artificial alkaline seas (cf. Ak-sai and Em-sai 177.505.6c) bringing the overall mean temperature down and providing a source of surface water for the inhabitants. Most of the planet's population is centred in Taros City (cf. Tarokeen 209.912.6d). Taros City represents the only major metropolitan area on Taros and is home to its planetary governor and spaceport. The surrounding hinterlands (cf. Greater Aestus Hinterland Region 599.255.7k) are home to about 50% of the world's population and Taros' hydro-farming industries.

SKIES OF FIRE

The Imperium's return to Taros came amid the upheavals that marked the end of the 41st Millennium and the brutal Imperial assault to retake the world of Agrellan. This epic confrontation between the Imperium and the T'au would spell an end to the alien empire's expansion into human-held space, and ultimately see the Damocles Gulf scorched with celestial flame. While the bulk of the Imperium's forces converged on Agrellan, under the command of Lord General Troskzer, several other attacks were launched against other T'au-held worlds – Taros among them.

Fleet Commander Konras Dray, in charge of the 455th Battlegroup Ultima, made for Taros, the holds of his ships filled with Elysian Drop Troops of the newly founded 17/23rd (an amalgamated regiment made up of the survivors of the 4621st Imperial Guard Army) and airborne soldiers of the Mordant 808th 'Sky Rats'. Once landing zones had been established, infantry and armoured regiments of the Tallarn 437th and Drookian 11th stood ready to begin the planetary war in earnest. Supporting these ground forces were squadrons of the 717th 'Blue Devils' Bomber Wing, 15th Fighter Combat Group with its Lightnings and Thunderbolts, as well as the 119th 'Dust Devils' Vendetta Squadron and the 88th 'Snake Skins' Valkyrie Squadron.

The plan was to retake the world with brutal swiftness, as it was believed at the time that the T'au would have had less than a standard Terran year to consolidate their victory, and so should still be refitting and rearming much of their forces. Added to this, it was hoped the massive strike at Agrellan would draw the T'au fleet from across the Damocles Gulf, further increasing Dray's chances of securing a swift victory. Like so many of the best laid plans, the reconquest of Taros did not go as expected.

The first indication that all was not right was when the Imperium's fleet emerged from the Warp at the Taros Mandeville Point. There had been nothing in the voyage through the Immaterium to indicate all was not well, nor had Dray's Navigators sensed anything strange – save for a moment when the Astronomican seemed to momentarily dim. As the fleet's sensors reached out into the void, seeking contact with the enemy, they discovered the stars seemed to have moved from where they should be, and strange celestial phenomena scarred the void. At first Dray thought his fleet must have somehow arrived at the wrong system, but soon enough, reports came in that Taros had been located – though like the stars, it too seemed to have changed.

FLEET COMMANDER KONRAS DRAY

A student of void warfare, Konras Dray learned his craft serving on the ships of Battlefleet Ultima. During the war for the Hydros Sector against a tendril of Hive Fleet Leviathan, Dray rose to the notice of the upper command echelons. Elevated to the command of the Lunar class cruiser *Imperial Truth* when its captain was killed, he rammed and crippled an enemy hive ship, turning the tide of fighting around Siglion IX. As a reward for his service, Dray was given his own command, and eventually, leadership of the 455th Battlegroup Ultima.

Driven by an almost pathological devotion to duty, Dray is an inflexible commander who seldom changes his plans in reaction to those of his foes. While some more forward-thinking Imperium tacticians under his charge have often butted heads with the fleet commander's stubborn refusal to alter his strategy in the face of a changing warzone, Dray's successes speak for themselves. In truth, Dray's style is well-suited to Imperial warfare. This is no more evident than in his command of the Aeronautica Imperialis fighter and bomber wings under his control. Dray trusts to the skill of his pilots and the superiority and numbers of Imperial aircraft to win the day, a strategy he has absolutely no doubt will be effective in retaking the world of Taros.



A WORLD TRANSFORMED

Unbeknownst to the Imperial battlegroup, years had slipped by during their time in the Warp. The Agrellan campaign was long done, and the once open space lanes between the galactic west and the T'au Empire had been closed by celestial fire and roiling warp storms. In the intervening years, the T'au had greatly expanded their dominance of Taros. Without the fear of Imperium reprisals, its people had multiplied under the administration of their xenos lords, while the T'au had introduced advanced mining equipment to fully exploit the mineral wealth of the planet. Long-range scans of Taros, made by the Imperium fleet as it moved in-system, revealed a world transformed by the Earth Caste. The first and most obvious change to Taros were the rings that now surrounded the planet – spoil from hundreds of orbital processing stations. Feeding these ore refineries, a single slender spike reached up from the surface of Taros. This was a marvel of T'au engineering known as the Fio'Kor'O Aur'ocy, or the Supremacy of Earth and Air. The warriors of the Imperium would come to call this space elevator the Needle or, in their darker moments, Aulis' Folly or the Folly, after the former governor of Taros, who first invited the T'au to the mining world.

Despite these changes, Fleet Commander Dray's duty allowed him no leeway when it came to his orders – he had found Taros, and it would be retaken. The Imperium fleet spread out, escorts forming a picket line around the battle cruisers which, in turn, protected the vulnerable transports. At any moment, Dray and his captains expected to see T'au warships converging from across the system, ready to repel them. What they discovered instead was a world wholly unprepared for assault. The handful of T'au military vessels clustered around the refinery platforms were vastly outnumbered by merchant ships and civilian transports. Years of isolation and protection by the greater Ksi'm'yen Sept had left Taros ill-prepared for the Imperium's return. Nonetheless, the T'au fleet broke orbit and moved to engage their old enemies while, on the ground, T'au air forces and human auxiliary ground elements scrambled to repel the inevitable orbital invasion.

The war in space lasted less than an hour as the overwhelming numbers of the 455th Battlefleet smashed their way through the T'au lines. Those T'au ships not destroyed or crippled in the initial assault pulled back into low orbit to seek cover among the mining platforms, and the Imperium's vessels followed. Even as the skies over Taros filled with searing lance beams and railgun fire, the pilots of the 455th Battlefleet rushed to their aircraft. Troops boarded Valkyrie gunships, and checked

their weapons, while bomb crews performed system checks and prepared for low-orbit insertion. Shielded by the Gothic class cruiser *Lord of Terra*, the first transports moved through the fighting into the lower exosphere of Taros. Dray firmly believed in the power of the Aeronautica Imperialis as a tool for subduing worlds. With orders to take the planet intact, he directed his airborne forces to make dual landings. The first, led by the Blue Devils, would strike at the defences of Tarokeen, the principal city of Taros. Bombers would take out the ground defences, while they themselves were covered by Lightning Strike Fighters of the 15th Fighter Group, followed by a mass landing by the Mordant 808th Sky Rats. Meanwhile, squadrons of Thunderbolts were tasked to lead an attack on the Needle, covering a landing by the Elysian 17/23rd.

Their void shields engulfed in flames and their plasma jets fighting against the planet's gravity, the Imperial transports reached the upper thermosphere. All along their hulls, airlocks opened to reveal rank upon rank of aircraft. Launch rails and gravity cradles extended out into the thin upper atmosphere of Taros, and then, as one, hundreds of Imperium fighters, bombers and troop transports streaked down towards the world below.

On the arid desert plains around Tarokeen, and in the parched mountains surrounding the Needle, ion cannon emplacements and smart missile batteries sent energy beams and ordnance hurtling skyward, each shot trying to bring down the invaders. Some Imperial aircraft were snatched from the sky by explosions or scattered over the upper atmosphere by this ground fire, but under cover of orbital overwatch, the majority flew on towards their targets.

At the controls of her Lightning Strike Fighter, Flight Commander Megana Ayce led the 717th Bomber Wing toward Tarokeen. A dozen other Lightnings hung in the air to her left and right, the fighters adopting a standard Aquila attack formation. Below them, three squadrons of Marauder Bombers settled into their attack run thousands of metres above the dry expanse below. Meanwhile, out of sight, and still hugging the upper atmosphere, Ayce could hear the chatter of the Mordant 808th Valkyries and Vendettas as they waited for the bombers and fighters to clear the way. Up ahead, she could just make out the Aestus, its seas shimmering against the sky. The region was the old industrial centre of the world and the site of its capital, Tarokeen. Calling in her squadron commanders, she checked her instruments as her fellow pilots sounded off. They were ready, or as ready as they were going to be. Only one question remained in Ayce's mind – where were the T'au?

GREAT SAND SEA

The terrain here is unsuitable for ground landings - recommend glassing this region from orbit to deny it to the Xenos.

BROKEN RIDGE
OUTPOST

LZ THETA
TALLARN 437TH

LZ GAMMA
DROOKIAN 11TH

PHYYYRA
HEIGHTS



TAROS MAP KEY

- △ T'AU GROUND DEFENCE
- △ T'AU ORBITAL DEFENCE
- △ T'AU LISTENING POST
- ▽ T'AU AIRBASE
- IMPERIAL DROP BASTION
- MAG-LEV
- - - ROADWAY
- HILLS AND MOUNTAINS
- ARTIFICIAL LAKES
- SAND DESERT

It's not clear why the aliens dug in on the Phyyra Heights - the 11th Drookian Infantry division is ordered to advance the area to find out.

AESTUS/TAROKEEN AOE 999.M41

AK-SAI
Hydro 23-30 still appears to be the principal water processing plant for Jarokeen; this makes it a priority target for the first phase of our landings.

LZ EPSILON
ELYSIAN 17/23RD

TAROKKEEN/
TAROS CITY

LZ BETA
MORDANT 808TH
'SKY RATS'

EM-SAI

We must secure our southern flanks against counter-attack - the Xenos have proven themselves resourceful and treacherous when it comes to striking from unexpected quarters.

SHAS'O V'ORS L'AR

Some T'au crave warfare, and to them times of peace are an endless torment. Such was the fate of Shas'O V'ors L'ar, known to his fellow Fire Caste warriors as the Dawnspear for his great victories during the Third Sphere Expansion. When he was given the honour of commanding the garrison at T'ros, V'ors knew it for what it was: retirement. Old by the standards of the T'au, V'ors believed his days of battle might be behind him, the T'au Empire expanding into new spheres and in new directions far from T'ros. He had spent years overseeing the Earth Caste works and the Air Caste fleets as the mineral bounty of the mining world was consumed. Even alien raiders and pirates proved little danger to T'ros, the advanced ships and weapons of the T'au sending them looking for easier prey. The return of the Imperium, however, has awoken V'ors' spirit. A follower of the Kauyon school of warfare, V'ors had long planned for such an invasion, and as soon as the invaders darkened the skies of T'ros, he began laying a trap for their forces.

DEATH RAINS ON TAROKEEN

Shas'O V'ors L'ar watched the Imperial air forces divide in high orbit and dive down into the lower atmosphere of T'ros. Even without the projected trajectories scrolling across the screens of his command bunker, he knew where they were heading. The humans (or Gue'la as some of his kind referred to them) remained as predictable a species as ever. The Supremacy of Earth and Air would have to be reinforced, but Tarokeen was another matter entirely. That the invaders thought capturing the former human capital of T'ros represented a strategic victory told him that there was much about the planet's transformation they had yet to discover. Directing ground forces to take up position around Tarokeen, V'ors dispatched the Red Horizon Hunter Cadre to defend the skies over the desert city. Their orders were to draw the invaders in and offer just enough resistance to make the enemy believe the T'au planned to dispute control of Tarokeen. Barracuda and Tiger Shark aircraft emerged from hidden wasteland airfields in preparation, their pale, camouflaged hulls glinting in the harsh light of T'ros' star.

Leading the forward elements of Red Horizon, Kor'La Kae O'ar's Barracuda AX-5-2 streaked skyward, her squadron forming up on her tail. Through the ghostly readouts scrolling across her aircraft's heads-up display, bright red outlines enveloped the approaching Imperium bombers, and the vibration of her railgun building up charge cut through the cockpit. Then, from out of the sun, dark shapes materialized, Kae's fighter AI identifying them instantly as Imperium Lightning Strike Fighters. Descending at blinding speed, the Lightnings cut through the T'au formation, their las weapons strobing as they did. Several of Kae's wingmen vanished in balls of superheated flame, or were sent spiralling down toward the desert below, but the rest immediately broke formation and attacked. Kae sent her aircraft into a hard loop, her Air Caste physiology absorbing the G-force without complaint. As she levelled out, an enemy fighter flashed across her gunsights and, even before her brain had fully registered it, her guns were firing.

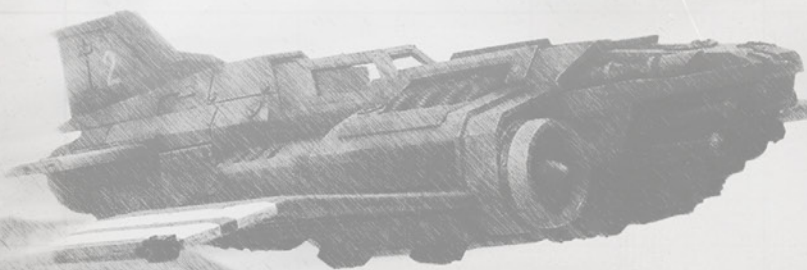
As the Barracudas and Lightnings became embroiled in a rolling dogfight above, the Marauder Bombers began their final run. From the edges of Tarokeen, anti-aircraft fire raked the sky. Blazing tracer fire from Hydra batteries crewed by human auxiliaries loyal to the T'au was accompanied by the bright flash of railgun rounds and ion cannon pulses from Fire Caste gun emplacements. Like flying tanks, the Marauders pushed their way through the ground fire, hard rounds and energy blasts scarring their hulls, the air around them filled with explosions. A few were cut from the sky by snaking lines of tracer fire, others were cleanly carved in two by well-placed railgun shots, but the bulk droned on over the city below. In perfect synchronicity, dozens of bomb bay doors opened, and thousands of tonnes of ordnance rained down on Tarokeen. The sprawling, arid city was instantly transformed, its dust-covered Imperium structures and adobe hab-blocks engulfed in flames. Like a mallet pounding a rock to rubble, the assault dragged on until entire districts of the city were reduced to burning ruin. Then, from out of the swirling black smoke that now hung over Tarokeen, the first Valkyries of the Mordant 808th materialised, their noses painted with grinning fangs and the pouncing rodent of the Sky Rats regiment.

As the ground war for Tarokeen began in earnest, the skies were still a battleground. Kae, two air-kills now under her belt, was drawing close to her third target. Everywhere, Lightnings and Barracudas twisted and swooped through the air, pursued by tracer fire and energy beams, or chasing their prey. The Air Caste pilot marvelled at just how fast and manoeuvrable the Imperium craft were, despite their archaic, blocky hulls and obvious armour plating. Time and again one of the human craft had slipped away from her with sudden aerial acrobatics or managed to escape her guns with a burst of speed. What the humans had in thrust and handling though they lacked in targeting and technology. The advanced AI systems of her craft allowed her to predict the movements of her targets, while her drone guns fired at enemies with nano-second reactions. Kae also had the advantage of her genetic heritage over her enemies, her body able to endure extremes of gravity the humans could not. All of this made her supremely confident as she closed in on her next kill. Before Kae could blast a Lightning from the sky, however, her comms lit up with V'ors' order to withdraw. Her training took over and the pride that might have made an Imperium pilot linger was replaced by Kae's devotion to the Greater Good. In twos and threes the T'au began to disengage, the Imperium pilots hounding them, and falsely believing the day was theirs.

As the air war moved off, the fighting below dragged on, and would do so for days yet to come. Though the T'au considered Tarokeen of only limited strategic importance, they deployed stealth teams and fast-moving Battlesuit cadres to harass the invaders. Meanwhile, the T'au's human auxiliary formations fought bitterly against the Imperium's forces, unwilling to yield their home. It would be a trend repeated across Taros in the coming weeks as the greater war for the world unfolded.

THE SUPREMACY OF EARTH AND AIR

Across the T'au Empire, the Earth Caste has created countless technological wonders and architectural triumphs. The young, vibrant T'au are not limited in their innovation, unlike some of the older races of the galaxy such as the technologically-stagnant Imperium, or the traditionalist Aeldari. This freedom is the catalyst behind the creation of the Fio'Kor'O Aur'ocy – the Supremacy of Earth and Air. Reaching hundreds of kilometres from the heights of T'ros' equatorial mountains well out into the planet's exosphere, it is a highway between the mines below and the orbital processing plants above. The T'au chose the location of the space elevator carefully, its base anchored in the region known to the planet's inhabitants as the Furnace. An inhospitable region with brutal daytime temperatures, the Furnace placed the elevator on the planet's equator, close to its upper atmosphere and in equilibrium with its rotation. Hot air from the region pumped into the freezing stratosphere also provided the elevator with power to operate its many lifts, as well as to drive deep core mining drones in the caverns below its base. A side effect of generating this vast natural power fuels the storm turbines. Another invention of the Earth Caste, these massive bladed discs extend out around the lower sections of the elevator, generating huge amounts of static electricity and dumping it into the surrounding atmosphere. By this means, the T'au discovered they could generate powerful sandstorms on command to defend the elevator from attack.

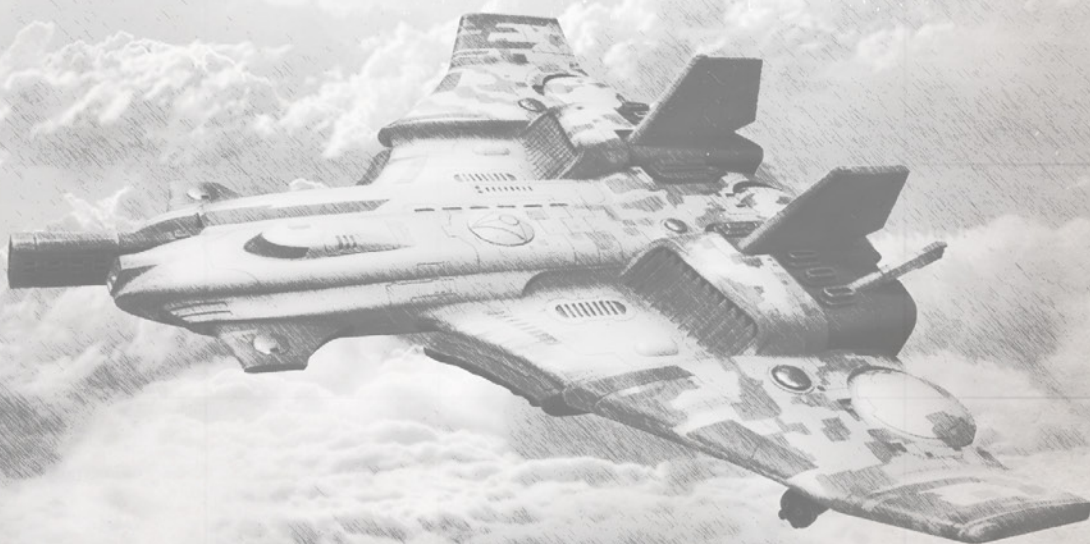


INTO THE FURNACE

Even as the Battle for Tarokeen unfolded, the Imperium's assault on the Needle was beginning. Flight Lieutenant Dyce Vander levelled out his Vendetta gunship, falling into formation with the rest of the 17/23rd Elysian Drop Troops assault wing. With a hiss, the void seals on his aircraft disengaged, and from the troop compartment he could hear the Elysians pulling off their bulky respirators. The creak of the gunship's hull and the whine of its engines, that had been their companions for the past 20 minutes as they made their orbital insertion, were suddenly joined by the roar of the wind. Black specks against the sky above, Vander could see the Thunderbolts providing top cover, the sight making him feel slightly better about flying into the teeth of an alien fortress. As the arid ground far below turned rugged and the mountains of the Furnace rose up from the horizon, the Needle resolved itself from the haze. For a moment Vander's brain didn't know what he was looking at, such was the scale of the xenos construct. A white line drawn across the faded blue sky of the planet, it bisected the firmament. Vander didn't have long to contemplate it before his controls lit up with weapons lock alarms. The Elysian Vendettas and Valkyries dived down into the winding canyons below, the transports sending out blinding flares and other counter-measures. Despite this, a small number of smart missiles found their mark, and the vox crackled to the

sound of dying aircraft. Vander spared a quick glance up, the Needle now an impossible tower looming over his Vendetta, to see the Thunderbolts duelling with alien attack craft, their weapons fire sparking in the distance. Then the sight was gone, hidden behind the mountain peaks and the Needle itself. Turning his attention back to the canyon ahead and his craft's controls, Vander watched as the distance to the drop zone diminished, and tried to prepare himself for whatever hell awaited him at the base of the Needle.

From the weapons rings that covered the space elevator's height, the T'au directed their defence. Air supremacy aircraft held the Imperial invaders at arm's length, as did the impressive anti-aircraft capacity of the Needle itself. On the ground, T'au armoured vehicles and emplacements added their firepower to the AA curtain thrown up around the Furnace, though the Imperium's troop transports proved difficult to bring down as they wove in and out of the rugged terrain at little more than a few hundred metres above the ground. The T'au's initial fear that the invaders would simply destroy the Needle from orbit with their warships seemed unfounded. It appeared they intended to take the structure intact – something they could not allow to happen. Fortunately for the T'au, the Imperium had both underestimated the importance of the Needle to them and its ability to defend itself. It was a notion they were very soon to be disabused of.



Vander's Vendetta broke out of the Furnace canyon into the huge valley basin surrounding the Needle. This close to the structure it hurt his head to even look at it, vertigo gripping even his trained mind if he dared glance along it towards the stars. As expected, alien structures covered the valley, and a storm of AA fire greeted Vander's arrival. The air alive with the whine of shrapnel and the thunder of gunfire, the Elysian Valkyries and Vendettas disgorged their soldiers into the warzone. Once his troops were clear, Vander moved into position to give them air cover. The lascannon on his aircraft pulsed as he strafed enemy infantry positions and blasted alien battlesuits from the air. From his vantage point, Vander could also see huge mining shafts feeding into the base of the Needle, each one disappearing down into the planet's crust. Out of these massive pits huge xenos aircraft suddenly appeared, larger than anything Vander had ever seen. Even though he hadn't encountered them before, he knew instantly what they were: Mantas – gigantic T'au air transports, each one large enough to carry an entire enemy battlegroup. From the Mantas, dozens of enemy battlesuits joined the fray, along with clouds of alien drones. On the ground, the Elysians, who had been pressing forward toward the Needle, were pinned down by the massive influx of enemy reinforcements. The Elysian Vendettas, Vander's among them, tried to force the Mantas back from the warzone below, but the massive craft seemed impervious to their guns and were able to erect a punishing wall of firepower in return.

Suddenly, call signs burst from Vander's vox as a squadron of Thunderbolts from the aerial engagement above screamed down to join the fray. For a moment his heart leapt with hope, but then the sky began to darken.

Down the length of the Needle, the T'au opened the static turbines to the atmosphere and discharged their energy into the sky. Winds whipped up almost instantly, and lightning cut through the air, while the rocky valleys of the Furnace disgorged thousands of tonnes of dust into the sky. The Imperium's pilots found their aircraft buffeted by brutal gales, their intakes clogged with sand and their instruments fried by electrical discharges. Visibility also dropped, thick dust clouds forming around the Needle, the structure periodically lit by flashes of lightning as the Furnace shook to the sound of thunder. On the ground, metre by metre the Elysians were being pushed back to their landing zones, while in the storm above the Imperial aircraft had been scattered. When he received the general order to retreat across the vox, Vander broke off engagement with the Mantas, the massive craft now mostly hidden in the sandstorm, and dove down to pick up as many survivors as he could.

Beaten and broken, the Imperium's forces fell back from the Needle, a little more than two-thirds of their aircraft limping out of the clouds and back into the blazing Taros sun. The first assault on the Needle had failed.



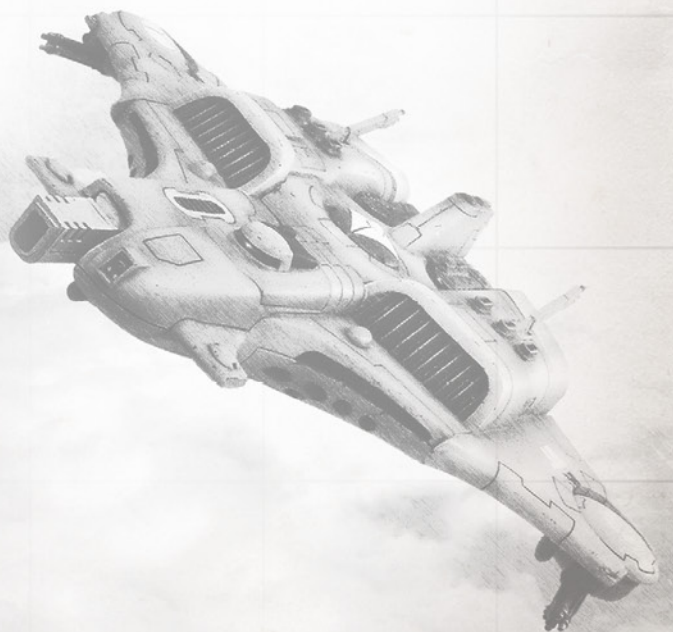
THE BATTLE ABOVE AND BELOW

Despite the failure to capture the Needle, the Imperium had cleared the skies over Tarokeen, and it was here, amid the growing ground war, that the invaders began landing the bulk of their forces. Regiments of Tallarn desert warriors and Drookian highlanders secured the area around the ruined city, and began the lengthy process of clearing the rubble of defenders. Imperium armoured regiments moved out into the desert, though their commanders were loath to stray too far into the outer reaches of the Aestus and beyond the air cover provided by the Imperial Navy. Nonetheless, Dray ordered ground attacks against the Union of Iron strongholds, the human outposts that had joined the T'au Empire. These were well-defended, and often subterranean, strongpoints protected from the ground by armour and weapons scavenged from the previous war, along with advanced T'au technology given to the locals when they joined with the xenos. No effective war could be conducted while the Union strongholds remained, the traitor humans able to strike out from their fortresses at Imperial supply lines or, perhaps given time, even pose a credible threat to the landing zones at Tarokeen. With T'au Air Caste raiders prowling the desert, it fell to the Imperial Navy to protect the Tallarn and Drookian ground forces, as well as provide the Elysian Drop Troops and Mordant 808th airborne infantry with air support.

While the Imperial forces moved against the mining fortresses of the Union, and squadrons of Lightnings and Thunderbolts prowled the desert skies looking for targets, Dray began formulating his next assault on the Needle. Reading reports from the survivors of the failed attack, he concluded that the ground defences around the base of the Needle, combined with the T'au's ability to use the space elevator to manipulate the atmosphere around it, made an aerial attack alone unfeasible. Instead, he began planning a combined arms assault that would drive the aliens back to their strongholds and crush them with the full might of his forces.

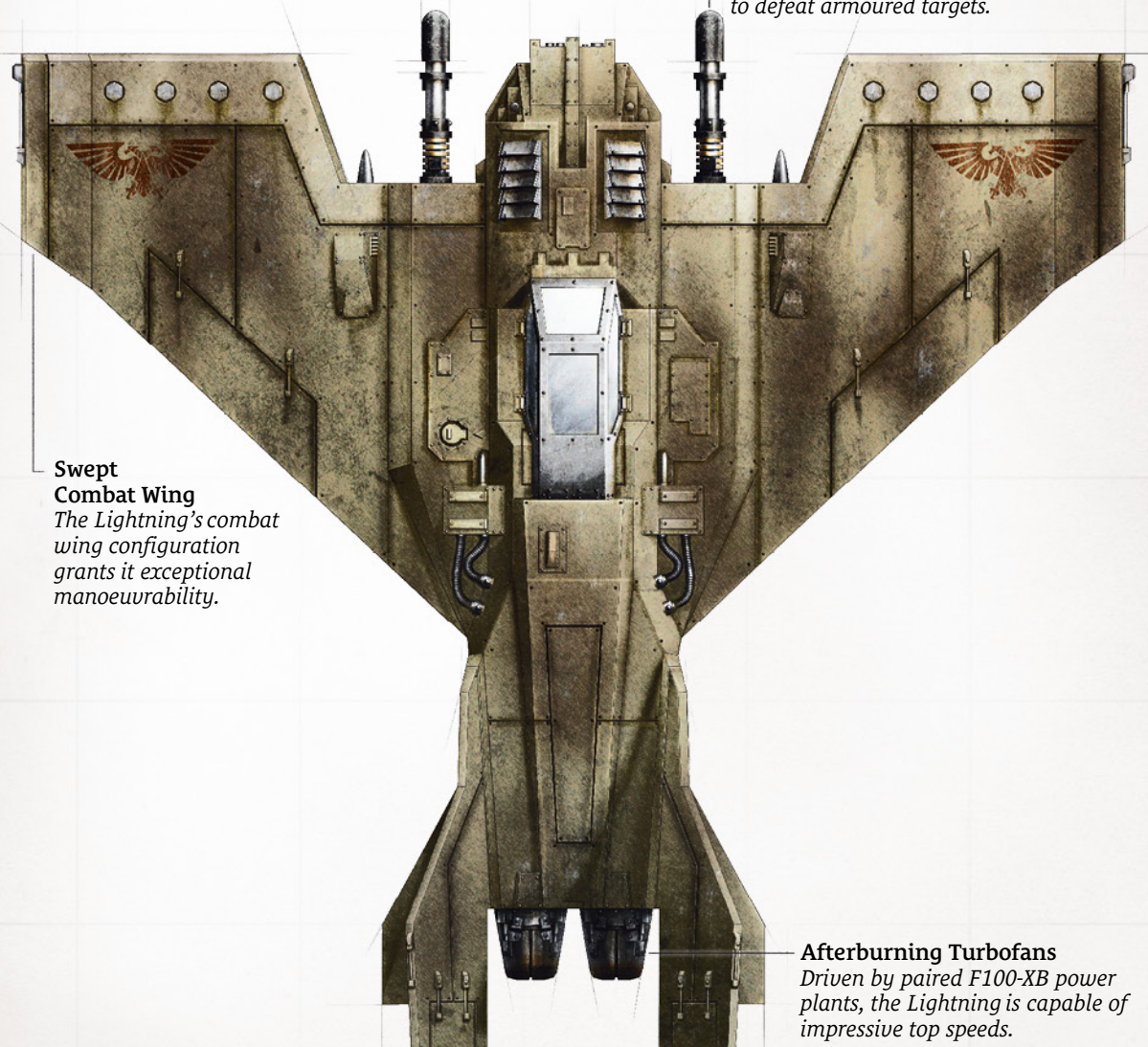
THE UNION OF IRON

In the wake of the T'au annexation of Taros, its human inhabitants adopted the philosophies of the Greater Good. Where once Imperium officials and mine bosses had governed every aspect of their citizens' lives, now an age of equality came to the planet. Of course, it was an equality dictated by the T'au, who were, as always, first among equals. For the locals though, the chance to guide their own destiny for the first time in their lives drove them to work harder for the T'au than they ever had for their Imperium masters. These worker conclaves soon established themselves as the principal human power on Taros. Dubbed the Union of Iron, they formed a strong alliance of mining outposts across the world, their fortress-mines delving deep into the caverns beneath the world's sprawling deserts. Working closely with the T'au, the Union enjoyed a standard of living far beyond that of their forefathers, as well as the sense of having a real stake in their future. It was therefore unsurprising that when, years later, the Imperium returned to reclaim Taros for the Emperor, the Union of Iron fought hard to keep the freedoms they had won.





931FW-Stormbearer
*931st Aces High Fighter Wing,
 'Stormbearer', Battle for Tarokeen.*



**Swept
 Combat Wing**
*The Lightning's combat
 wing configuration
 grants it exceptional
 manoeuvrability.*

Skyflame Pattern Lascannon
*Highly accurate lascannon are used
 to defeat armoured targets.*

Afterburning Turbofans
*Driven by paired F100-XB power
 plants, the Lightning is capable of
 impressive top speeds.*

THE BATTLE OF BROKEN RIDGE

As the planning for the second assault on the Needle took shape, the battle against the Union of Iron began in earnest. On the ground, the Tallarn 14th Armoured Division ranged out into the desert supported by Tallarn infantry regiments and Drookian raiding companies. His focus fixed upon defending the Supremacy of Earth and Air, V'ors drew the bulk of his ground forces back to the Furnace, using the extensive subterranean realms beneath Taros to move his Hunter Cadres around. However, the T'au commander was not about to let the invaders have free rein to conquer the Aestus or break apart the fortresses of the Union of Iron. He knew that once his human allies were defeated, nothing would stand between the Imperium and a full-scale ground assault against the Needle. It fell to the Air Caste to bleed the invaders as they traversed the vast, open deserts of Taros, their vehicles and men exposed to attack from the sky. To further terrorise the humans, the T'au took to flying at night, where the advanced systems of the fighters gave them an edge against the Imperium's Thunderbolts and Lightnings. As they advanced, the Imperial ground troops' only warning of air attack was often the scream of T'au railgun rounds as they ignited the air. If they were lucky, this hellish sound was joined by the hammering autocannon or the crack of multi-lasers as friendly aircraft joined the fray, the flicker of fighters duelling away in the darkness overhead.

The first major obstacle for the ground forces was a string of Union mining fortresses known as the Broken Ridge. These artificial termite mounds extended both above and below the ground, their guns able to command the desert for kilometres in all directions. To clear the way for the Tallarn armoured division, Marauder Bombers were sent in to break apart the Union's surface defences.

Wing Commander Dex Lavok watched the hazy horizon rise up to meet his targeting reticule. Behind him, down the long fuselage of the Marauder Bomber he could hear his crew checking their guns or priming the aircraft's payload. Below his squadron, lines of battle tanks and troop carriers advanced across the desert, visible only at this altitude as long dust clouds drifting up from the parched ground. Dex looked again

through the targeter, numbers indicating altitude and distance to target scrolling by in the corner of the lens. Then, in the far distance, the massive form of the Echo-Gamma mining facility took shape. Its brutish Imperial outline had been changed by alien technology, and where grand Aquilas had once adorned the structure, now only strange xenos symbols could be seen. Dex was still contemplating the hateful sight when the hammer of bolter fire snapped him back to the present. Chatter burst across the vox, and he twisted around to see Cabot in the dorsal turret traversing his twin heavy bolters, spent casings raining down into the cabin. Ignoring the targeter for the moment, Dex slid out of the bombardier's station and into the nose gun, while overhead Captain Jadic yelled into the vox for the Marauders to maintain close formation.

Dex scanned the skies for enemies through the gun sights, looking for the distinctive shape of the xenos aircraft. The mining facility was getting much closer now, its anti-aircraft guns filling the sky with bursts of flame and shrapnel. Through this storm, Dex saw two Thunderbolts banking towards his Marauder. For a moment he didn't understand what he was seeing – had the squadron been reinforced? Too late he saw the strange alien icons on the Thunderbolts' wings, and much too late his finger squeezed the trigger of the twin heavy bolters. Autocannon rounds tore apart the nose of the Marauder, and Dex had a second to see Captain Jadic transformed into crimson mist, before he was falling, his screams torn away by the high desert wind.

On the ground, the Imperium's tank commanders watched as the lead bombers were cut apart by what appeared to be Thunderbolts, and for a moment their hearts sank to see such treachery. Then, fresh Imperial fighters joined the fray, diving down on the Union aircraft from above, and the skill of true Imperium pilots won through. The first bombs began to fall upon the Echo-Gamma facility and, in answer, its guns thundered out across the desert, sending up plumes of earth around the advancing Imperium forces. The Battle of Broken Ridge had begun.

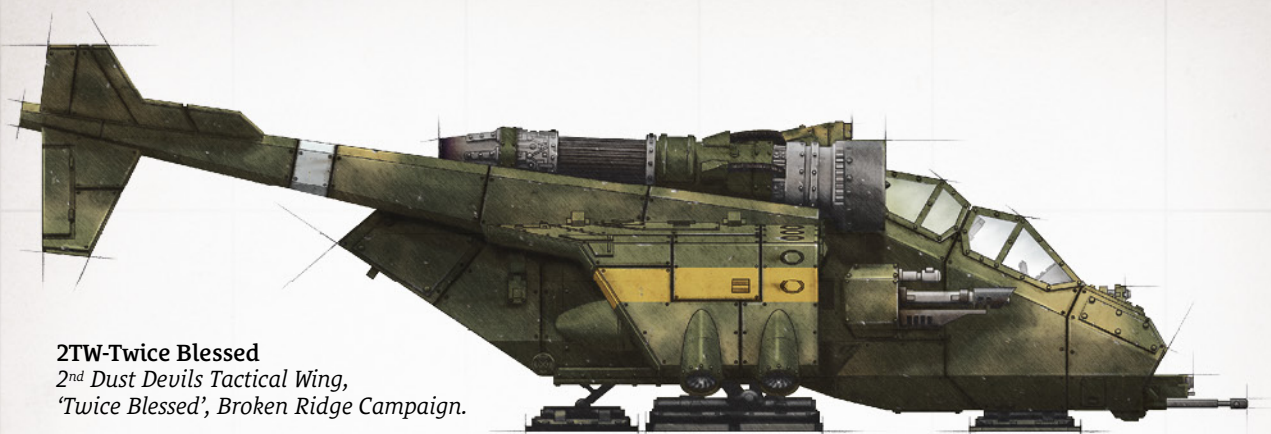
A HOLLOW WORLD

During the Imperium's long occupation of Taros, countless mines were carved into its surface. From these deep pits the planet's minerals were extracted in vast quantities, and over time these mines worked their way ever deeper into the world's heart. And yet the efforts of the Imperium did little to change the overall structure of Taros. When the T'au took control of the planet, they began mining on a scale far beyond anything the previous inhabitants could have imagined. After discovering large cavernous regions beneath the surface, the T'au Earth Caste set about constructing massive, underground mining drones. These autonomous machines were set loose within the caverns, their passage gathering ores for the T'au Empire and creating an even larger underground network. After years of constant operation, the mining drones had hollowed out a significant proportion of the planet's upper mantle. This subterranean realm had also become a second home to the locals, entire settlements constructed in the cool darkness beneath the burning sands overhead. When the Imperium returned, these caverns shielded the defenders from the wrath of the invaders' warships. In time, however, the sub-realms of Taros would become a battlefield in their own right.

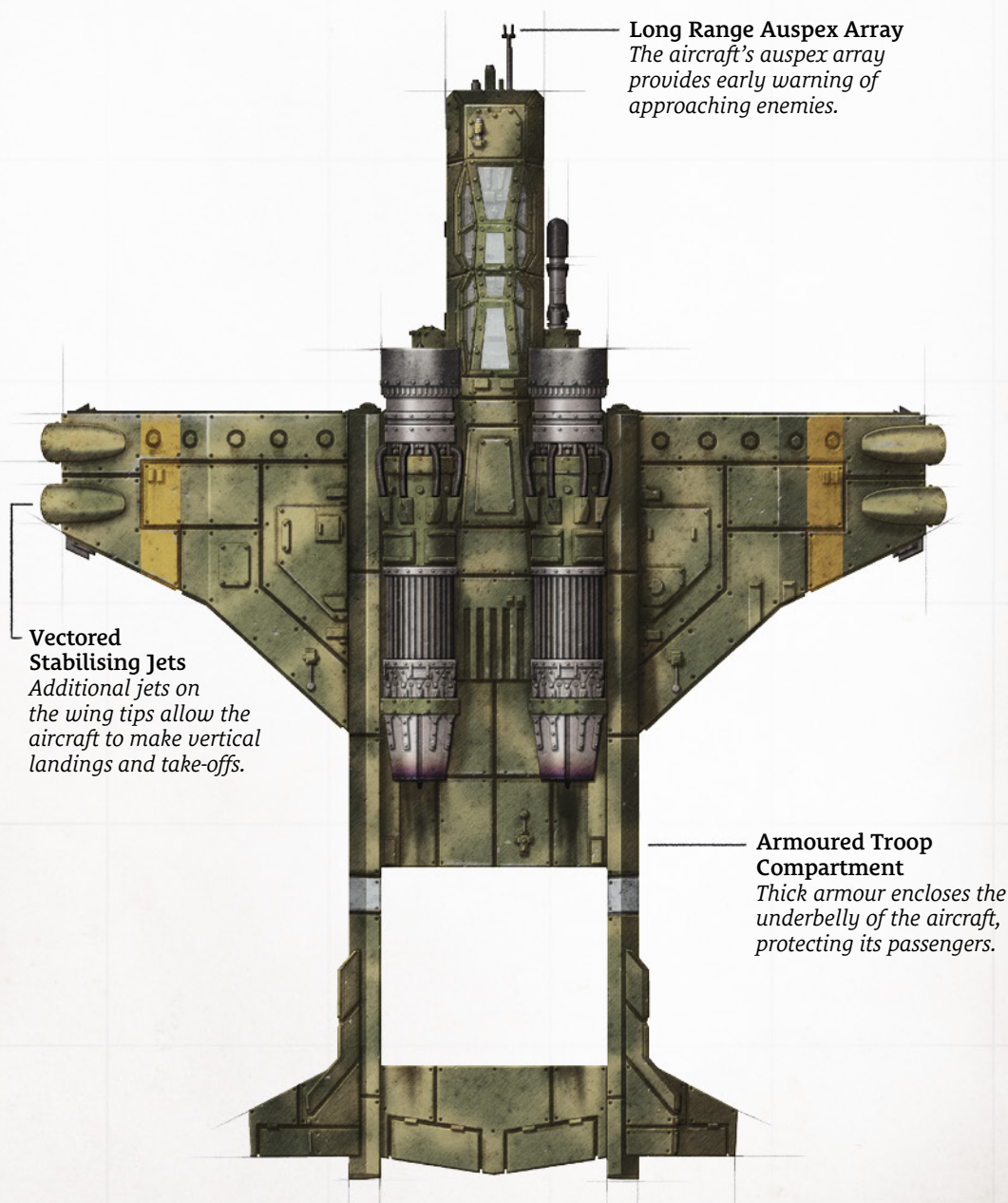
WAR BENEATH THE SANDS

Bombers hammered the Broken Ridge from above, reducing enemy fortifications to ruin. Fighters duelled over the bombers, the T'au's human allies using captured Imperium fighters to strike at the bomber wings and the advancing tank formations. Against the heavy desert defences of the mining fortresses even the Tallarn armoured division, adept at this kind of warfare, found its tank companies grinding to a halt, while for infantry caught in the open, there was nowhere to hide from the enemy's guns. In orbit, Fleet Commander Dray watched the campaign unfolding, the officers of his strategium muttering among themselves as unit designations and casualty reports filtered in. Had the battle for the Broken Ridge been one taking place only on the ground, or in the sky overhead, it would have seemed the Imperium's forces were making little headway against their enemies. Dray, however, was about to open up a new front against the Union's stronghold, from a direction they would not expect. In the wake of the attack on the Needle, pilots had reported the presence of the massive deep core mines around the space elevator's base. Extensive augur scans of the Furnace and Aestus region revealed massive underground caverns stretching across the length and breadth of the planet; caverns large enough to drive an army through – or fly an armada of gunships within.





2TW-Twice Blessed
*2nd Dust Devils Tactical Wing,
'Twice Blessed', Broken Ridge Campaign.*



Long Range Auspex Array
*The aircraft's auspex array
provides early warning of
approaching enemies.*

**Vectored
Stabilising Jets**
*Additional jets on
the wing tips allow the
aircraft to make vertical
landings and take-offs.*

**Armoured Troop
Compartment**
*Thick armour encloses the
underbelly of the aircraft,
protecting its passengers.*

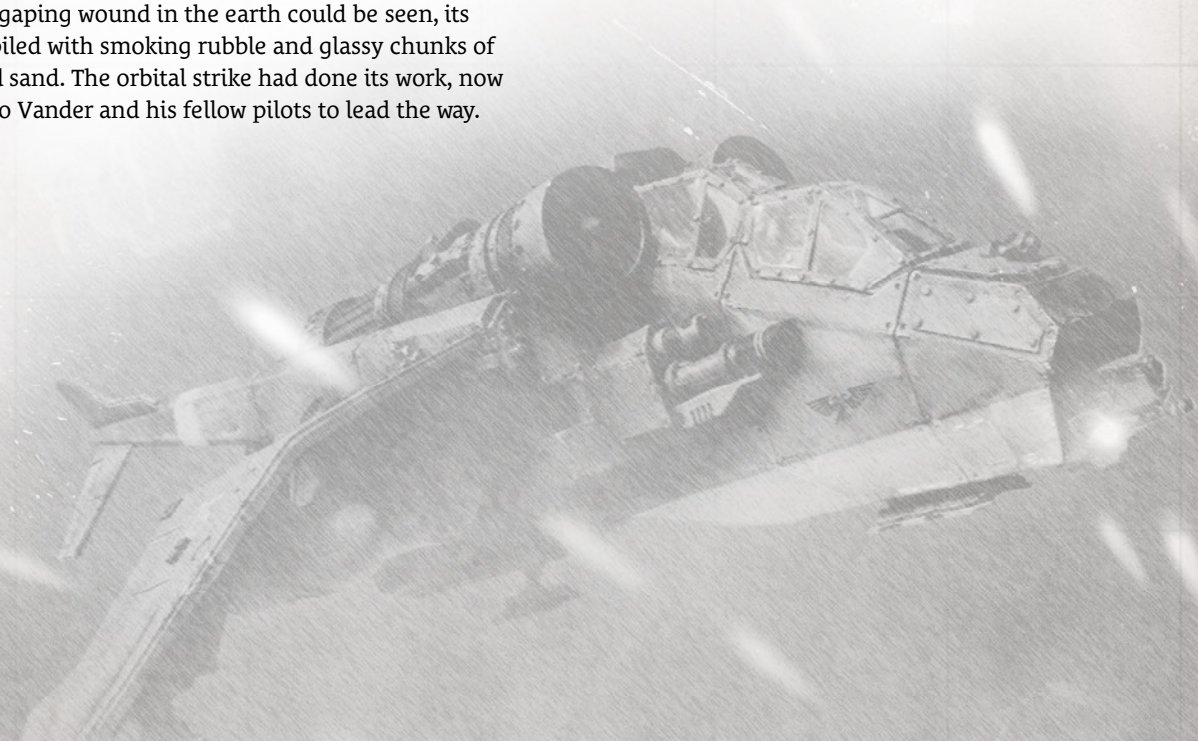
From their staging areas on the outskirts of Tarokeen, scores of Elysian 17/23rd Valkyries and Vendettas took to the sky. Flight Lieutenant Dyce Vander was among them, his Vendetta refuelled and rearmed after escaping the battle beneath the Needle. In his time serving in the 119th 'Dust Devils', Vander had seen his fair share of close calls. Famously, while fighting on the graveyard world of Cagen Secundus, he'd had to ditch in the middle of an Ork mekyard, both him and his co-pilot defending the crash site for almost an hour against Orks until extraction arrived. What he'd heard in their briefing today though, put the ferocity of that engagement to shame.

Soaring out across the arid wastes, the Valkyries and Vendettas skimmed only metres above the hard ground, heading for a rendezvous point in the desert. From the planet's surface their destination was unremarkable, no different to any other part of Taros' countless square kilometres of arid wasteland. Beneath the sand and rock, however, was a passage leading deep into the planet's crust, and on toward the cavernous reaches beneath the Broken Ridge. First, though, the Imperial forces would have to make a door.

The tinted canopy of Vander's Vendetta suddenly darkened in response to a blazing line of fire that streaked down from heaven to earth. For a few moments the spectacle unfolded in silence, and then the shockwave struck his aircraft, shaking it like a rock in a can. When the light and booming roar at last faded, a massive swathe of desert had been transformed. Where once there had been wasteland, now a gaping wound in the earth could be seen, its sides piled with smoking rubble and glassy chunks of melted sand. The orbital strike had done its work, now it fell to Vander and his fellow pilots to lead the way.

Vander's Vendetta plunged through the coiling smoke that lay over the hole, and all at once proximity alarms lit up his controls – it was going to be close quarters from now on. Guiding his craft down into the darkness, he switched on the Vendetta's stab-lights, their beams illuminating a world of reaching stalagmites and dripping cavern walls. Cut off from the vox-net by hundreds of metres of stone and sand, the formation flew on through the subterranean night, following ghostly green holo-maps that led to the caverns below the Broken Ridge. Vander almost dared to hope their underground airdrop might take the enemy by surprise and he'd be able to land his troops with minimal resistance. However, years of war had taught Vander that such hope usually proved futile.

The gunships flew out into the massive cavity below the Broken Ridge, the cavern stretching out around them so far that even their aircrafts' auspexes had trouble detecting its edges. Then the darkness exploded with AA fire. Tracer fire from autocannon and heavy stubbers mounted on mining rigs raked Vander's gunship, and where he saw silhouettes in the gloom below, he responded in kind with multi-laser and lascannon fire. The Elysians in the troop compartment added their firepower as well, the Guardsmen leaning out of the open doors to snap off shots with their lascarbines. Unlike the attack on the Needle, however, no elite T'au Hunter Cadres rose to meet them, and the assault thundered home.



EYE OF THE STORM

After days of savage fighting, both above and below, the Broken Ridge fell. It was to be the first step on the road to the Furnace and the second assault on the Needle. Since the initial failure to capture the space elevator, Commander Dray and his advisors had decided to make a concerted ground assault. It was believed that once the T'au's human allies had been dealt with, or cut off from their xenos masters, and the region around Tarokeen subjugated, the xenos would retreat to the Needle. In the shadow of the great construct, Dray planned to land a hammer blow that would shatter their dominion over the desert world and drive the survivors back into the void. Though some pockets of resistance still existed within the ruins of Tarokeen, the Imperium's divisions moved out deeper into the desert. Tallarn tank regiments and mechanised infantry companies led the way, moving from one mining fortress to the next. From the smouldering ruins of the Broken Ridge they launched fresh assaults against the White Wastes and Burning Rocks fortresses. With each new Imperial advance, Elysian and Mordant airborne units made subterranean attacks, while the bombers of the 17th hammered the defenders from above. The Union of Iron fought on doggedly, displaying all the stubbornness of the Imperium itself, holding ground to the last, and often perishing when their fortresses collapsed down upon them. By contrast, their T'au allies fought only long enough to slow the Imperium's advance, before pulling their forces back to the next strongpoint. All the while the invaders closed in on the Furnace, but going was slower than Dray had hoped, and a campaign he had hoped to execute in days was now weeks old.

While the greater ground and air war continued, numerous smaller engagements were taking place. As much to reclaim some honour for their previous defeat as to secure the last Aestus outposts, the Elysians retook Hydro-Processing Plant 23-30, sweeping in from the air to claim it at a blistering pace. While the defenders were quickly overcome, it soon became evident to the Elysians that the plant was not the prize it had once been, and T'au technologies had long ago replaced its use. Elsewhere, bitter aerial combat raged over the Alkaline Flats to the south of Tarokeen. A region of industrial spoil, the flats had become the focus of the Imperium when a T'au Castellan class cruiser crashed to earth after the fighting in orbit. The vessel had survived re-entry mostly intact, and the Earth Caste were working tirelessly to make it operational once more, something the Imperium could not allow. Dozens

of sorties were launched against the downed cruiser, bombers attempting to destroy it on the ground while Thunderbolts and Barracudas duelled overhead.

Perhaps the most critical battles, beside those to break the Union of Iron, took place in the Grand Reservoir beneath the Aestus. Here the T'au had heavily industrialised the production and refinement of water for the world's inhabitants, and the population relied on the Grand Reservoir for life on the heat-blighted world. Through the constant rain that fell from the cave roofs, Imperium fighters fought to capture these vital machineries. Here the T'au resisted hard to keep the invaders at bay, and in the close confines of the grand caverns combat drones and Barracudas lurked for the unwary, while Fire Caste AA batteries covered those places where the caves narrowed or forced pilots to hug the ground or ceiling.

WAR IN THE STRATOSPHERE

Fighting in the upper atmosphere of Taros brought its own challenges. At these extreme altitudes, aircraft and pilots of both sides were pushed to their limits. Fighters skimming their service ceiling had to contend with ice forming on their hulls, engine failure and weapons malfunctions. Crews were likewise in peril should their compartments rupture or oxygen supplies fail, the almost non-existent atmosphere promising swift asphyxiation. Nonetheless, the airspace around the Needle's upper atmospheric sections, where it reached out towards the void, became a furious aerial battlefield.

Both sides played to their strengths, the Imperium relying on their robust Thunderbolt squadrons, the fighters able to withstand the stresses of near-space dogfights, while the T'au pilots themselves were better able to survive in such an inhospitable environment. The Imperial Navy escort class warships also had a role to play from the void, their point defence batteries providing anti-aircraft barrages fired down into the stratosphere from above. Likewise, Imperium escorts, due to their size and manoeuvrability, were able to get 'closer' to Taros than the larger, more ponderous battle cruisers, often closing to within a few thousand kilometres in support of their comrades below.



Damus 'Hell Walker' Waylund
Flight Officer,
180th Sky Rats Air Auxiliary
Damus lost his left arm when his
Valkyrie went down during the
first Taros war. When he learned of
the crusade to retake the world, he
immediately requested a transfer
and was assigned to the Mordant Sky
Rats. During the war he would earn a
reputation for braving heavy ground fire
to reach his landing zones, earning him
the nickname 'Hell Walker' Waylund.

BURNING PEAKS

When dawn came, it revealed gutted battle tanks and burned-out troop carriers. The night attack had hit dozens of Tallarn armoured companies, and many had been reduced to only a few operational vehicles. Despite their losses, the Imperium assault pressed on, the sight of the Furnace mountain ranges, and the slender line of the Needle in the distance, promising an end to the war for Taros. With so many tanks destroyed, it fell to the foot soldiers to lead the way into the mountains. Tallarn and Drookian infantry regiments, guided by loyalist Tarosi tribesmen, began the grim task of clearing the approaches to the Needle. In the weeks it had taken the Imperium's ground forces to cross the desert, V'ors had heavily reinforced the approaches to the Furnace's central valley and the base of the space elevator. Every narrow mountain pass and twisting gully was covered by guns, while AA platforms peered out at the sky from mountaintop bunkers. In addition to the T'au defences, the Astra Militarum also had to contend with the savage temperatures of the Furnace. Even the desert world native Tallarn struggled to keep their troops hydrated as they fought through blistering days and freezing nights, the environment as much an enemy as the aliens themselves. In the air, the Imperial Navy did all it could to cover the infantry's progress, Vendettas and Thunderbolts hitting Fire Warrior strongpoints where and when they were able. The mountains were a maze of valleys and canyons, and Imperium and T'au aircraft often played cat and mouse among their winding lengths. T'au pilots also turned the mountains themselves against the attackers, bombing the sides of canyons to start rockslides that would bury ground troops. But, day by day, the Imperium's advance continued.

Blazing sunlight beat down upon the canopy of Kor'La Dor'n O'ka's Tiger Shark AX-1-0-4. Despite flying well below the lines of mountain peaks to confound enemy sensors, the sun on Taros always seemed to find him. Inside the cockpit of the heavy fighter-bomber it was, however, cool, the life support systems keeping Dor'n comfortable despite the outside temperatures. With calculated precision, the T'au pilot moved in on his prey. Up ahead, human infantry were trying to push through a Fire Warrior defensive position. Accelerating to attack speed, Dor'n's aircraft screamed overhead. In the scant seconds the battle was below him he released clouds of support drones, the tiny craft tumbling away from his Tiger Shark before righting themselves and swooping down to aid the Fire Warriors. At the same time, Dor'n triggered his twin ion cannon, strafing the Imperial gunline and scattering heavy weapon crews. Then he was away, moving off into the maze of canyons

and leaving plumes of smoke and flame behind him. As he moved to check the tactical net for fresh targets, missile alert alarms lit up his HUD. Automatically, the Tiger Shark deployed counter-measures, decoy drones filling the sky in its wake. Dor'n banked hard towards the canyon wall as the first missile exploded mere metres away, spraying his aircraft with shrapnel. His port engine burst into flames and master alarms filled the cockpit with their wails as the Tiger Shark rolled towards the unforgiving rock of the mountains. Dor'n triggered the Tiger Shark's ejection pod system, the forward section of the cockpit shooting out into the air. He had a brief glimpse of his aircraft ploughing into the canyon wall, and a pair of Thunderbolts shooting past overhead as he fell. Then, just before he hit the ground, gravitic motors kicked in, cushioning his abrupt return to earth. By the time Dor'n had freed himself, he could already see the rescue drones closing in on his position. He would return to the Supremacy of Earth and Air and fly again, but even he could tell his side was losing this war. And yet he trusted to Shas'O V'ors L'ar's plan, and knew the T'au would prevail.

DRONE AIRCRAFT

In aerial combat, as in all aspects of warfare, the T'au Empire makes extensive use of drone technologies. Drones are considered heretical by the Imperium, for they make use of thinking machines to guide their actions, a technology that once – if the tales of the Age of Strife are to be believed – brought humanity to the brink of extinction. As distasteful as their use is to the Imperial Navy, however, human commanders have learned not to underestimate the seemingly innocuous T'au aircraft. Often measuring no more than a metre across, drones come with a wide variety of armaments. Those most commonly encountered by Imperium pilots are slaved to T'au aircraft, where they independently operate weapon systems such as burst cannon and smart missile pods – functioning with reaction times far faster than a human gunner could hope to achieve. Swarms of defensive drones might also be employed against enemy fighters, the drones either operating at lower altitudes in hunter-killer packs, or as airborne mines. On Taros, many T'au Empire AA batteries included drone casters designed to fire mine-carrying drones into the path of enemy aircraft with devastating effect. These tactics proved especially effective in the subterranean air war, where fighters had little room to react to attacks or escape the far more manoeuvrable T'au defences.

MIDNIGHT SKIES

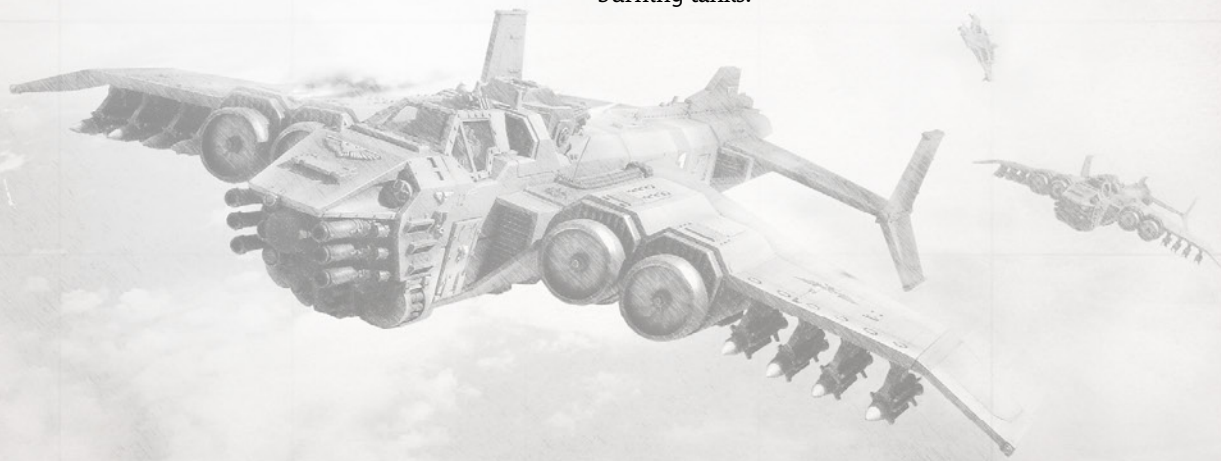
As the Tallarn advance armoured units finally closed in on the Furnace mountain range, almost five weeks after the initial assault on the Needle, the T'au launched their counter-offensive. During the darkest period of Taros' night, when the only light over the desert came from faint starlight and the glittering bands of its rings, scores of Barracuda and Tiger Shark aircraft emerged from subterranean landing strips. As the campaign ground on, Shas'O V'ors L'ar had come to the bitter realisation that his forces were grossly outnumbered by the invaders. Thus he now waged a war of delay rather than defence, constantly giving ground to preserve his ground and air forces, and only fighting long enough to slow the Imperial advance and weaken their armies. It was regrettable that the human inhabitants of Taros had endured the brunt of the invaders' invasion, but such was the cost of serving the Greater Good. V'ors was as prepared as the humans to sell his life for the empire, however, if he could forestall the Imperium's final assault against the Needle. He hoped he would not have to.

Flying low over the rolling dunes, the T'au aircraft slipped beneath the Imperial augurs, their proximity to the ground, and their own sensor baffling drone technologies, making them near invisible to the invaders. Squadrons moved out toward Tarokeen and the invaders' landing zones, as well as to the ruined mining fortresses where the Imperium's ground forces thought themselves safe. The largest force made for the armoured divisions pressing on toward the Furnace, where hundreds of Imperial tanks ground their way across the wastes, exposed to the cold midnight skies.

Red Horizon Cadre led the way. Behind the controls of her Barracuda AX-5-2, Kor'La Kae O'ar watched the ghostly green outline of the invaders' tank columns crawling across the desert through her blacksun filter. Priming her railgun, she swept down into a strafing run, picking the lead vehicle from the forward-most

company. The Imperium forces didn't even know she was there before her target was torn apart in a mushroom cloud of flame. Walking the burst down the column, she hammered the ground with hypersonic rounds, each one punching fist-sized holes in ceramite and plasteel. By the time she swooped back into the sky, there were a dozen vehicles burning in her wake. Suddenly from above, las beams stabbed down. Her wingman was caught in their path, his canopy exploding and his fighter nosing down to smash into the sand dunes below. Kae twisted her aircraft up, and saw two enemy Lightnings appear in her infra-red targeters. They were coming down too fast and too hard to avoid her return fire, and with a flick of her trigger she lit them up with burst cannon fire. One twisted away at the last moment, flames coming off its tail, the other simply came apart in a cloud of steel and fire. Kae shot up through the explosion, the remains of the Lightning pattering off her airframe like hail. Below, the rest of Red Horizon were strafing the Imperial armour, tracer fire from AA snaking back and forth across the night sky. A warning from her console alerted Kae to a second pair of Lightnings joining the fray, and she twisted her aircraft around to engage. Tumbling end over end, the T'au and Imperium fighters chased each other, Kae seeking an opening to bring them down. These pilots were not as reckless as the previous ones, and she had to work hard just to keep them away from the rest of Red Horizon Cadre.

She was still duelling with the Lightnings when the comms lit up – *mission complete, time to withdraw*. Though it pained her to do so, she complied, noting the Lightnings' designations should she ever cross their paths again. Rocketing back into the night sky, Kae's Barracuda pitched up and away from the pair of Lightnings on her tail, their multi-laser fire chasing her through the darkness. Completing her aerial loop, her fighter dropped back down to deck, and mere metres above the sand she hit her boosters. Kae vanished back into the night, leaving the horizon lit up by lines of burning tanks.



THE STORM UNLEASHED

After days of gruelling fighting, with the T'au falling back from one defensive position to the next, the first Imperium scouts entered the approaches to the Needle's base. The Furnace had been watered with human blood and littered with the wrecks of dozens of Imperial aircraft, but the time for the final assault was finally at hand, and the Imperium would have its vengeance. As Tallarn infantry regiments began to fight their way out into the valley surrounding the Needle, Commander Dray issued the order to commence the final assault. At the edge of the atmosphere, hundreds of fighter aircraft converged on the space elevator, while beneath the Furnace, Elysian and Mordant airborne infantry began their subterranean insertion. The T'au met the invaders in force with dozens of Hunter Cadres. Fire Caste warriors and Battlesuits darted in and out of the ruins that now surrounded the Needle, days of sustained artillery barrages having reduced the mining outpost to rubble. Imperial Guard regiments were met with a storm of plasma and pulse fire and had to fight for every step they took. Overhead, Vendetta gunships supported the advance, their lascannon picking out heavily-armoured T'au war suits with destructive beams, while their multi-lasers and heavy bolters strafed Fire Warriors positions.

Beneath the ground, the fighting was no less furious. Squadrons of Elysian and Mordant Valkyries had breached the subterranean hangers beneath the Needle, the massive landing platforms that hung over a mining shaft that descended kilometres into the core of the world. From these platforms T'au aircraft rose up to assail the invaders, Barracuda fighters and drones buzzing around the airborne regiments as they made their landings. Coming in under extreme fire, many Valkyries were torn from the sky by dancing lines of burst cannon or railgun rounds, their hulls aflame and their pilots screaming into the vox as they tumbled into the black below. Many more, though, touched down in the hangers, Elysian and Mordant troops leaping out even before their aircraft were on the ground, the Guardsmen already firing their lasguns at enemy positions. Thunderbolts covered their landings, drawing fire from the platforms and keeping the T'au fighters away from the more vulnerable transport aircraft.

The outer platforms were in Imperium hands when the blast-proof shield doors defending the entrance to the Needle above began to rumble open. Believing that the troops topside must have reached the space elevator, the forward-most Elysians advanced to capture the vast entrance. Then, from the gloom, the first Manta emerged, the massive assault carrier cutting everything nearby down in a storm of plasma fire. Forming up into an Aquila formation, a dozen Thunderbolts converged on the new threat, their roaring autocannon met by a cacophony of T'au defensive weaponry.

As the battle beneath the earth unfolded, 20 kilometres above the Furnace, the war for the Needle raged. Thunderbolts and Lightnings attacked the space elevator's gun batteries and cargo lifters. In orbit above, Imperial Navy assault troops were fighting their way into the Needle's tip against heavy resistance, and it fell to their aircraft to stop reinforcements from below reaching the battle.

Wing Commander Jarnel Gauss jinked his Lightning Strike Fighter as a pair of T'au missiles streaked out from the Needle. Pulling hard to the left, he brought his aircraft around the massive structure, the missiles twisting in flight to follow him. This close to the space elevator it dominated his canopy, like a mighty iron tree reaching down toward the hazy brown earth far below, and up into the black above. Its sides were covered in rails and platforms, each one either for conveying cargo or to house AA batteries. It was one of the latter that had locked onto his fighter after he had opened up a cargo pod with his multi-lasers. Under a sustained assault from his guns, the pod had come apart, spilling T'au infantry out into the void. Pitching up, he hit his thrusters and shot up towards the extreme service ceiling of his plane. Warning alarms blared in his ear as G-forces pressed him into his seat but, satisfyingly, the missiles struggled to match his speed in the stratosphere's thin air. Just before his aircraft stalled, Gauss flipped it on its axis. Spiralling down he shot past the missiles, their guidance systems unable to follow him. Now in a brutal nose dive, he hugged the length of the Needle. As pods and AA platforms appeared, he squeezed off bursts of las fire, explosions blooming in his wake. As the air around him thickened, he gained more control of his aircraft and edged out of the dive, looking for more targets.

Far below Gauss and his squadron, the skies began to darken as Shas'O V'ors L'ar ordered the sandstorm generators activated. Winds and dust lashed the combatants on the ground, and in the air the Vendettas providing air cover were driven back. Those pilots, like Gauss, fighting around the Needle's long stem were buffeted by the winds, and found their visibility dropping away. As the Imperium's advance in the Furnace slowed under the lashing fury of the sandstorm, V'ors used the reprieve to swiftly redeploy forces to the battle beneath the earth.

Jarnel Gauss had seen the storm generator in action during the first failed assault on the Needle, and along with the rest of fighter command he had been analysing its weaknesses. This time when the winds began to howl and the skies grew black, the Imperial forces did not withdraw or flounder in the dark, instead they moved to counter the threat. Gauss, still close enough to see the Needle through the storm, keyed his sensors to the massive electrical signature of the storm generator's turbines. His fighter dodging and weaving through the gloom, he closed in on one of the massive machines. AA fire lit up the air all around but Gauss pressed in, using the speed of his Lightning to stay ahead of the T'au guns. At the last moment, he fired his skystrike missiles into the turbines, the dark sky turning blazing orange as they were torn apart.

Up and down the length of the space elevator, other pilots were taking out the generators, and though dozens of Imperium fighters were ripped apart by AA fire or picked off by Barracudas, enough turbines were destroyed to cause the storm to lose power.

With the destruction of the storm generators, Shas'O V'ors L'ar knew that the Needle could not be held. Unwilling to waste his troops for no good reason, he ordered a general retreat. On the ground, beneath the Needle, and in the sky, the T'au began to pull back. Using long-established rally points, they yielded the Needle to the Imperium. Over the Furnace, Vendetta and Thunderbolt pilots chased the retreating T'au aircraft, while in the subterranean hangar bays, Elysian and Mordant troops secured the landing zones.

AFTERMATH

Taros had been reclaimed. The space elevator had been captured, and the xenos driven back into the void – Shas'O V'ors L'ar retreating to the Ksi'm'yen Sept to muster fresh forces. For now, the Imperial Navy ruled the planet's desert skies. Time would tell if Konras Dray's invasion fleet could hold out until Taros was finally brought back into the fold of the greater Imperium, or if the T'au could wrest the world back from the humans again. As long as the Fleet Commander drew breath and the might of the Imperial Navy was at his command, Taros belonged to the Emperor, and Dray would fight to the last to keep it so. In either case, the war for the arid world was far from over...



SCENARIOS

While most Aeronautica Imperialis engagements take place in the open skies far above the planet's surface, sometimes aircraft are forced to fight mere metres above the ground, flying in and around dangerous terrain features. Aerial combat in such close quarters is fraught with peril, and aircraft run the risk of crashing into rocky outcrops, canyon walls, or even each other should the pilot make the smallest miscalculation or should the slightest mechanical failure cause something to go wrong.



SCENARIOS

A small dogfight between one or two aircraft per player can be played within a small Area of Engagement, roughly 2'x2' square. As the size of the force increases so does the size of the Area of Engagement, with the average size of an Area of Engagement being 3'x3' and particularly large battles or complex scenarios requiring an Area of Engagement of 6'x3'.

CHOOSING A SCENARIO

For ease, most games using two simple forces of an equal points value can be played using either the Dogfight scenario (see page 62) or the Chase scenario (see page 63). This scenario handles an aerial clash between two rival forces and can include the Night Fighting and Bad Weather rules for an extra degree of tension. Should both players wish, and if they have access to a more comprehensive range of miniatures and terrain, the other scenarios detailed in this section will offer greater challenges.

The simplest way to decide which scenario to play is for both players to mutually agree upon a scenario and upon the size of force they wish to use, but if they cannot decide upon a scenario, simply roll a D6 and look up the result on the table below:

D6	Scenario
1-2	Subterranean Assault
3-4	Sky-fortress Attack
5-6	Canyon Attack Run

SCENARIO FORMAT

All scenarios are presented in the following format:

Background

A brief overview of the action and each force's mission objectives.

Forces

Recommended forces for the scenario. If there are any restrictions or requirements placed on forces or weaponry, these will be detailed here.

Set-up

How to set up the Area of Engagement, including any ground targets and landing zones, and where each player deploys their forces.

Special Rules

Any special rules that may apply to this scenario, such as Night Fighting and Bad Weather, or Reserves, will be listed here. If there are any additional special rules that apply to this scenario, they will be detailed here also.

For example, if one player's force is smaller than the other's by a significant margin, the scenario may offer them an underdog bonus, or one player may be required to complete a specific mission objective in order to win.

Victory Conditions

This section describes how to determine who has won the game.

RESERVES

Some scenarios use the Reserves rule. Reserves are friendly aircraft that happen to be in the area and redirect to offer support, or are additional aircraft arriving after the first wave.

Whatever the case, aircraft held in reserve are not deployed at the start of the game, but will come on in later turns. To see if aircraft held in reserve arrive, roll a D6 for each aircraft at the start of each turn, before the Choose Manoeuvres phase, and consult the table below:

Turn Number	D6 Roll Required
Turn 1	N/A
Turn 2-4	5+
Turn 5-8	4+
Turn 9+	3+

When an aircraft held in reserve becomes available, place it within a full hex touching the edge of the Area of Engagement, anywhere within the area in which its side deployed. The reserve aircraft automatically enters play with its Speed dial set to its Max Speed. Its Altitude dial may be set as the controlling player wishes.

In the Choose Manoeuvres phase, choose an Ace Manoeuvre for reserve aircraft that have arrived in this way. The aircraft follows all of the normal rules.

Any aircraft held in reserve that have not entered the Area of Engagement when the game ends count as having Accidentally Disengaged for the purposes of calculating Victory points.

NIGHT FIGHTING & BAD WEATHER

Not all aerial combat takes place in daylight or in perfect weather conditions – aircraft often have to operate at night or under heavy clouds and in mist or fog.

At the start of a game in which the Night Fighting and Bad Weather rules are used, roll a D6 and consult the table below. The player that wins the roll to deploy first should also roll to determine the weather conditions, before either player sets up any of their force:

D6	Conditions
1-3	Exceptional visibility (all of the normal rules apply)
4-5	Bad Weather
6	Night Fighting

Bad Weather

For Bad Weather, roll a D3 after deploying forces but before the Choose Manoeuvres phase of the first turn. The result of this roll determines the Altitude level of the cloud cover. Above this Altitude level, all of the normal rules apply. At this Altitude level or below, aircraft follow the Night Fighting rules as follows:

Night Fighting

Finding and hitting targets at night is a lot harder than it is in daylight. During Night Fighting, aircraft may only fire at targets at Short range and Medium range. Additionally, the number of Firepower dice rolled at Medium range is halved, rounding fractions up. The number of Firepower dice rolled at Short range remains the same.

TERRAIN HEIGHT

Unless the rules for fighting at low altitude are in use (see page 58), terrain generally does not play a part in aerial combat. However, some hills, mountains and other terrain features such as hive spires and high altitude landing platforms may be tall enough to encroach into the battlegrounds of aircraft.

Players may choose to use Terrain Height. In this case, any terrain may be designated an Altitude level. A hill for example may be Altitude 1 or 2, whilst a mountain or other terrain feature may be as high as Altitude 3 or 4.

Aircraft must be travelling at an Altitude level higher than the terrain in order to pass over it; otherwise they will crash into it if any part of their base touches any part of the terrain during the Movement phase. If this happens, all remaining Structure is lost and the aircraft is immediately removed from play.

Any Ground Defences sited upon terrain with an Altitude level add that level to their Effective Altitude (X). Any ground targets sited upon terrain with an Altitude level are still classed as being at Altitude 0 for the purposes of targeting with Air-to-Ground fire, whilst the Altitude of the terrain is used for the purposes of modifiers on the Firepower dice.

GROUND TARGETS

Ground targets is the collective name given to any ground-based objective. A ground target can be almost anything, from an enemy bunker that may house crucial sensors and air control apparatus to the last line of defence protecting an important enemy leader from harm. Alternatively, a ground target may represent a friendly squad that has been operating deep behind enemy lines gathering intelligence that requires extraction, or the stranded crew of another aircraft awaiting rescue.

Whatever the individual ground target may represent, their use depends upon the scenario being played. The scenario rules will explain how many ground targets feature, where they should be placed within the Area of Engagement and, most importantly, how they can be destroyed or rescued as required!

LANDING ZONES

In some scenarios, players are required to land aircraft within a designated landing zone before taking off again, in order to fulfil scenario objectives. Such scenarios will give details of where to place one or more landing zone markers, and will specify a number of hexes from this marker within which aircraft must land. This is measured from the edge of the hex in which the marker itself is placed. It is important to note that aircraft can land outside designated landing zones, but in order to fulfil the scenario objective, an aircraft must end its movement at Altitude 0 within the landing zone. Aircraft may take off in the following turn – it does not take long to load or unload in an active warzone!



Dal'yth Sept-Dawn Sword
Air Cadre El Au'nuvra, Dawn Sword
Auxiliary Attack Wing.



T'au Sept Markings
Sept markings are represented by symbols stamped onto the aircraft's hull.

Drone Ports
Independently firing drones in specially designed ports act as point defence weapons.

FIGHTING AT LOW ALTITUDE

In addition to the rules presented previously, players may choose to use the following rules to represent aerial combat at extremely low altitude.

A Low Altitude Area of Engagement can be represented either by making additions to an existing Area of Engagement, or by using a special Low Altitude Area of Engagement. These differ from normal Areas of Engagement in that some of the hexes will show terrain features that encroach into the skies. In addition to using a Low Altitude Area of Engagement, fighting at Low Altitude uses three special rules that make it unique: the Close Quarters rule, the Collisions rule and the Stay Low rule.

Low Altitude Area of Engagement

Playing a game of Aeronautica Imperialis within a Low Altitude Area of Engagement means the fighting will take place down ruined city streets, a winding canyon network or a similarly restricted environment.

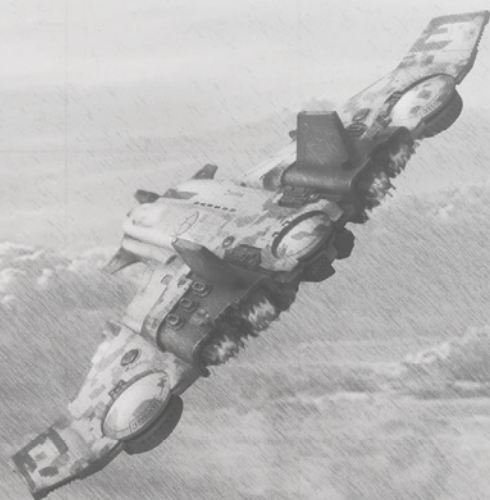
To represent this on an Area of Engagement, some of the hexes must be designated as Terrain Hexes. A Terrain Hex is a hex that contains a prominent terrain feature such as a hill, building or forest. If the players are using a special Low Altitude Area of Engagement, such features will already be marked. If players wish, they can also modify an existing Area of Engagement to include terrain features. This is accomplished by simply marking some hexes as Terrain Hexes, either with markers or appropriate pieces of terrain. Aircraft cannot enter Terrain Hexes so it is fine if these pieces of terrain rise above the table. Note that a single piece of terrain might cover multiple hexes, in which case all the hexes covered by the terrain piece count as Terrain Hexes.

Stay Low

During a game taking place at Low Altitude, the action is happening close to the ground. This could be because the attack requires precision bombing, the element of surprise or perhaps it is too dangerous for aircraft to give up the cover afforded by the ground. While playing a game on a Low Altitude Area of Engagement, aircraft cannot exceed Altitude 2. Aircraft that climb to Altitude 3 or above are considered to have Accidentally Disengaged just as if they had flown off out of the Area of Engagement (see page 17).

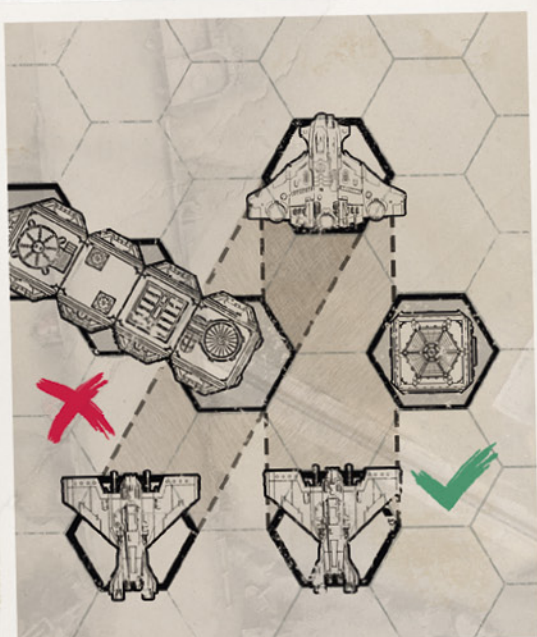


TAW58.1: Graphic representation of standard Low Altitude Aerial Combat
(Approved for War Zones 176ZF-567F)



Close Quarters

Unlike the infinite skies above, a Low Altitude engagement will contain obstacles such as hills, buildings or trees. This means that unlike normal games of *Aeronautica Imperialis*, it is possible for an aircraft to find potential targets obscured by a Terrain Hex during the Targeting step of the Firing phase. Therefore, when targeting an enemy aircraft or ground target, the firing aircraft must check to see if their weapon has line of sight. After checking to determine that the target is within the firing weapon's arc and in range, check to see if the target's base is obscured by a Terrain Hex. A target is considered visible if it is possible to draw a straight line from any part of its base to any part of the firing aircraft's base. If it is not possible to draw a straight line from any part of the target's base to any part of the firing aircraft's base then the target is considered to be obscured and cannot be fired upon by the chosen weapon.



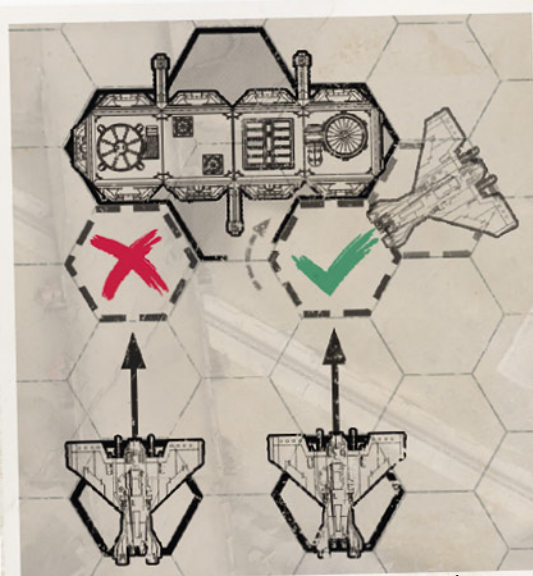
TAW59.1: Graphical representation of Approved Close Quarters Engagement Techniques, Imperial Navy Pilot Training

Collisions

Aircraft on a Low Altitude Area of Engagement can be in danger of hitting terrain features. These are represented on the Area of Engagement by Terrain Hexes, and should be clearly marked so both players can identify them.

If an aircraft's movement would take it into a hex containing terrain, it stops in the adjacent hex. Roll a D6 and compare the result to the aircraft's Handling characteristic. If the result is equal to or higher than the aircraft's Handling characteristic, the aircraft can turn until it is facing a hex that does not contain terrain. As soon as the aircraft is facing a hex that does not contain terrain, it stops turning and continues its movement. If the D6 roll is lower than the aircraft's Handling characteristic, the aircraft is immediately destroyed in a fiery explosion and removed from play.

In addition to risking crashing into terrain, at such low altitudes aircraft also run the risk of an aerial collision. Should a moving aircraft ever end its movement in a hex occupied by another aircraft, the moving aircraft will continue moving in the same direction until it reaches the first unoccupied hex as normal. However, once the moving aircraft has ended its movement, roll a D6. On a 2+, nothing happens. On a 1, however, the pilot has misjudged their manoeuvre and an aerial collision is inevitable. Both aircraft immediately suffer one damaging hit (see **page 23**) before turning to face a randomly determined direction. To determine this direction, number the sides of the base of the aircraft and roll a D6. The aircraft is then turned until its Front Arc is facing the direction indicated by the result of the roll.



TAW59.2: Graphical representation of approved and disapproved manoeuvring techniques in Low Altitude Aerial Combat.

ROLLING AREA OF ENGAGEMENT

Sometimes an aerial battle will also be a chase, or an attack run, as two forces race toward their target.

To represent these kinds of encounter, players can use a special Rolling Area of Engagement. This unusual Area of Engagement is represented not by a single large map, but by three smaller map sections. Each of these sections should be 12 hexes square, i.e., 12 hexes long and 12 hexes wide, though slightly smaller or larger map sections will also work.

When setting up a Rolling Area of Engagement, place three map sections in a line so they are touching one another. To represent the effect of the ground rapidly moving beneath the combat, the Rolling Area of Engagement map sections are removed and replaced as the aircraft progress along them.

While in play, the map sections at either end of the Rolling Area of Engagement are designated as being either the Leading section or the Trailing section, whilst the one in between is designated the Middle section. The outside edge of the Trailing section is referred to as the Trailing edge of the Rolling Area of Engagement, whilst the outside edge of the Leading section is referred to as the Leading edge of the Rolling Area of Engagement.

At the start of the game, the players should designate one end section as Leading and the other end section as Trailing (see diagram TAW 61.1 opposite).

When an aircraft travelling through the Leading section reaches the Leading edge of the Rolling Area of Engagement:

- The aircraft does not Disengage as it normally would, instead its movement is interrupted and momentarily halted.
- The Trailing section is then cleared of any aircraft, terrain or Ground Defences before being picked up and removed.
- A new map section is placed down so one of its ends is in contact with the Leading section. This may be the Trailing section that has just been removed or, if other map sections are available, it may be one of those.
- Once placed, this new map section becomes the Leading section, the map section that was previously the Middle section becomes the Trailing section, and the section that was previously the Leading section becomes the Middle section.
- Once this is done, the aircraft that triggered this removal and replacement of map sections resumes its movement.
- Map sections continue to be removed and replaced in this way whenever an aircraft reaches the edge of the Leading map section.

Falling Behind

Any aircraft removed when the Trailing section is removed are considered to Fall Behind. When this happens, the controlling player must immediately roll a D6 and compare the result to the aircraft's Handling characteristic. If the result is equal to or higher than the aircraft's Handling characteristic, the aircraft becomes a Reinforcement and may come on again later, as described in the scenario.

If the result of the roll is lower than the aircraft's Handling characteristic, the aircraft has been left behind and is considered to have Accidentally Disengaged from the Area of Engagement.



Impenetrable Walls

The long edges of a Rolling Area of Engagement represent impenetrable walls, be it the walls of a canyon, the sheer sides of a deep trench, or mountains bordering a valley. Aircraft cannot cross the long edge of a Rolling Area of Engagement, voluntarily or otherwise. Any aircraft that does is immediately removed from play and is considered to have been destroyed for the purposes of calculating Victory points.

Disengagement Turn

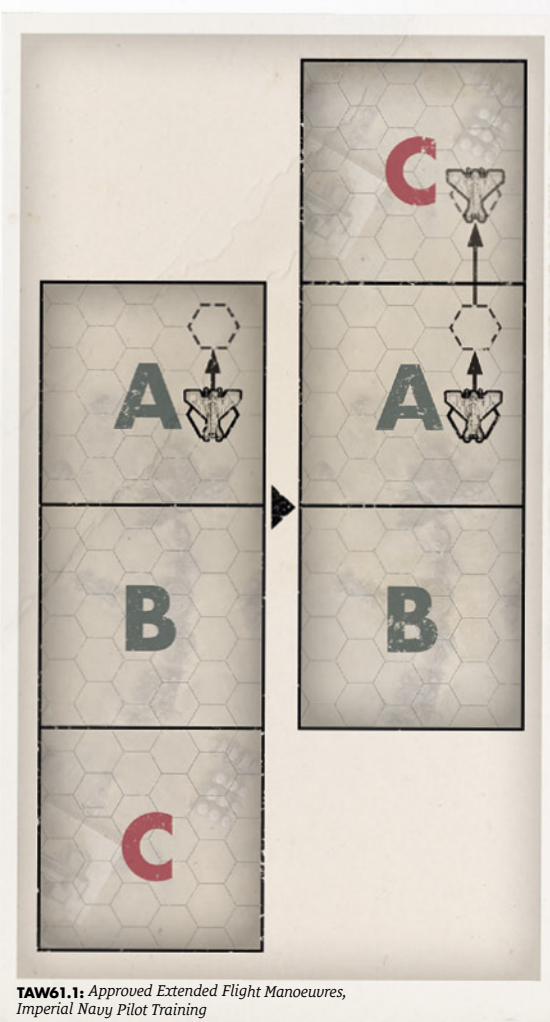
During the Disengagement turn, map sections are neither removed nor replaced. If any aircraft crosses the Leading edge of the Leading section, it is considered to have Voluntarily Disengaged.

Generating Terrain Features

A Rolling Area of Engagement works especially well with the rules for Fighting at Low Altitude, representing a trench run, or a chase through the artificial canyons of a ruined metropolis. Terrain Hexes can be placed on each map section when they are first set up. Then, each time a section is recycled, i.e., removed from the Trailing end and added to the Leading end, clear off any terrain features and randomly generate new terrain features, placing them on the section before moving any aircraft onto it.

To generate these terrain features, both players should roll a D6. The higher result is the number of terrain features generated. Starting with the player whose aircraft triggered the recycling of the Trailing section, i.e., the aircraft moving off the far edge of the Leading section, the players take turns placing one terrain feature on the map section. These can be placed anywhere, provided they are at least one hex away from where the map section touches another map section.

Example: Halfway through its movement, Jon's Lightning Strike Fighter reaches the edge of the Leading section of the Area of Engagement. Jon stops his aircraft's movement before removing any aircraft, Ground Defences and terrain from the Trailing section. He then picks up and places the Trailing section so that it is in contact with the edge of the Leading map section. In doing so, the Trailing section becomes the Leading section and the section which was previously in the middle, becomes the Trailing section. The previous Leading section now occupies the space in the middle, between the other two sections. Jon and his opponent then generate and place terrain features on the newly placed map section, before finally resuming and completing the movement of Jon's Lightning Strike Fighter.



THE DOGFIGHT

Two air combat patrols meet unexpectedly in the skies. The encounter is fast and deadly.

FORCES

Players should mutually agree a points value between 25 points and 250 points, and choose their forces accordingly.

Only Scouts, Fighters and Bombers are recommended for the Dogfight scenario.

SET-UP

Players set up on opposite sides of the Area of Engagement. Starting with the winner of a roll-off, players take turns to place an aircraft within three hexes of the edge of the Area of Engagement. If Ground Defences are in use, they may be set up within six hexes of the owning player's edge of the Area of Engagement.

Both players may choose the Speed and Altitude of each aircraft before setting it up.

SPECIAL RULES

Reserves

If both players agree, each player may keep a maximum of two aircraft in reserve. The combined cost of these may be no more than 25% of the total points value of the force.

Night Fighting and Bad Weather

If both players agree, the rules for Night Fighting and/or Bad Weather (see page 56) may be used during this game.

Fighting at Low Altitude

If both players agree, the rules for Fighting at Low Altitude (see page 58) may be used during this game.

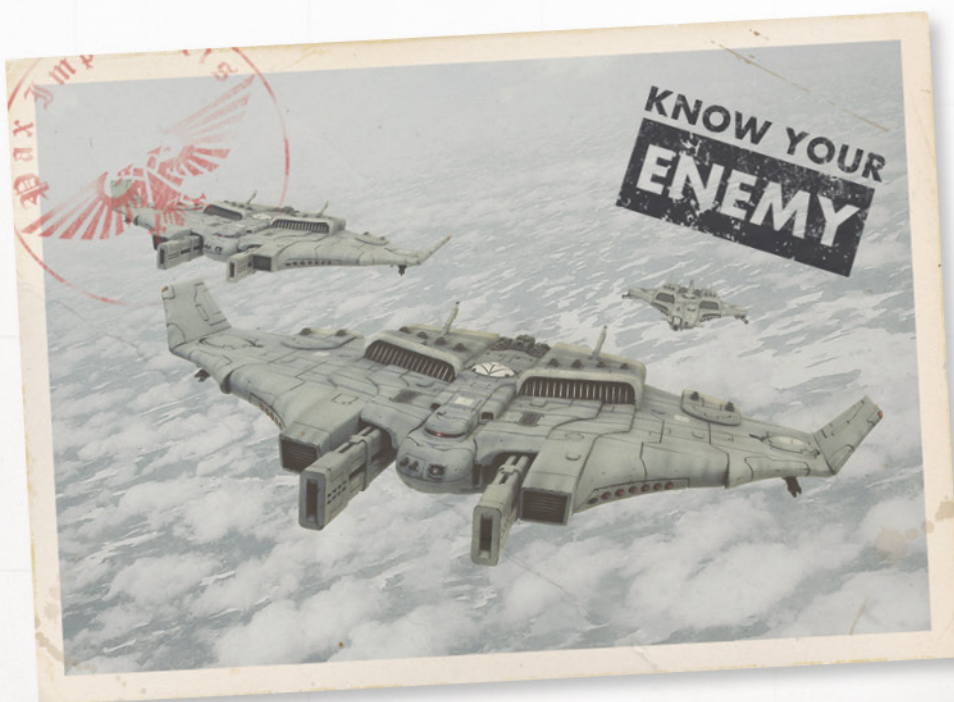
Underdog

If one player's force is smaller than their opponent's by 5 points or more, they will automatically have the initiative in the first turn. If there is 4 points or less difference, initiative is rolled for as normal.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The game last for 12 turns, until one side is forced to disengage, or until only one player has aircraft left operating in the Area of Engagement.

When the game ends, calculate Victory points to determine the winner.



THE CHASE

Two air combat patrols play a deadly game of cat and mouse along a rolling river valley or a twisting canyon.

FORCES

Players should mutually agree a points value between 25 points and 250 points, and choose their forces accordingly.

Only Scouts, Fighters and Bombers are recommended for the Chase scenario.

SET-UP

This scenario is played on a Rolling Area of Engagement, as described on **page 60**. In this scenario, both players choose one of their aircraft to be set up at the start of the game, the rest are held back as Reinforcements, as described below.

The two aircraft chosen to be set up at the start of the game are set up within three hexes of the Trailing edge of the Rolling Area of Engagement. The winner of a roll-off decides who sets up their aircraft first.

If Ground Defences are in use, they may either be set up within the Leading section at the start of the game, or they may be set up within the Leading section when a new Leading section is placed. However, once a Ground Defence falls behind, it is lost.

Both players may choose the Speed and Altitude of each aircraft before setting it up.

SPECIAL RULES

Rolling Area of Engagement

This scenario is played on a Rolling Area of Engagement (see **page 60**).

Reinforcements

Aircraft held back as Reinforcements are not deployed at the start of the game, but will come on in later turns. To see if aircraft held back as Reinforcements arrive, both players roll a D6 for each of their Reinforcement aircraft at the start of each turn, before the Choose Manoeuvres phase, and consult the table below:

Turn Number	D6 Roll Required
Turn 2	4+
Turn 3-5	3+
Turn 6+	2+

When an aircraft held back as a Reinforcement becomes available, place it within a full hex touching the Trailing edge of the Rolling Area of Engagement. The Reinforcement aircraft automatically enters play with its Speed dial set to its Max Speed. Its Altitude dial may be set as the controlling player wishes.

In the Choose Manoeuvres phase, choose an Ace Manoeuvre for Reinforcement aircraft that have arrived in this way. The aircraft follows all of the normal rules.

Any aircraft held back as Reinforcements that have not entered the Area of Engagement when the game ends count as having Accidentally Disengaged for the purposes of calculating Victory points.

Night Fighting and Bad Weather

If both players agree, the rules for Night Fighting and/or Bad Weather may be used during this game (see **page 56**).

Fighting at Low Altitude

If both players agree, the rules for Fighting at Low Altitude (see **page 58**) may be used during this game.

Underdog

If one player's force is smaller than their opponent's by 5 points or more, they will automatically have the initiative in the first turn. If there is 4 points or less difference, initiative is rolled for as normal.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The game lasts for 12 turns, until one side is forced to disengage, or until only one player has aircraft left operating in the Area of Engagement.

When the game ends, calculate Victory points to determine the winner.

SUBTERRANEAN ASSAULT

A squadron must make a daring troop landing against an underground target.

FORCES

Players should mutually agree a points value between 100 points and 250 points and choose their forces accordingly. The attacker must include one or more aircraft with a Transport characteristic of 1 or higher and may not take any Scouts or Ground Defences. The defender may take any force they wish, but must include at least one Fighter and one Ground Defence.

SET-UP

In this scenario, one player is the attacker and the other the defender. The winner of a roll-off decides which they will be.

Starting with the defender, both players take turns setting up 'Areas of Terrain', as described below using the Cave System special rules.

Once terrain has been set up, place two landing zone markers six hexes from one edge of the Area of Engagement and three hexes away from each other. This is the defender's edge. The area within two hexes of each of these is a landing zone. The attacker deploys first, placing all of their aircraft within three hexes of the edge of the Area of Engagement opposite the defender's edge. The defender's aircraft are set up in hexes touching their edge of the Area of Engagement. Ground Defences may be set up within six hexes of the owning player's edge of the Area of Engagement. Both players may choose the Speed and Altitude of each aircraft before setting it up.

SPECIAL RULES

Cave System

The Subterranean Assault scenario uses all of the rules for a Low Altitude Area of Engagement (see page 58), with the exception of the Stay Low rule.

When setting up the Area of Engagement, starting with the defender, both players take turns placing Areas of Terrain. There should be a minimum of six Areas of Terrain on the Area of Engagement, meaning each player must place a minimum of three. Once the minimum number of Areas of Terrain has been placed, a player may opt not to place any more Areas of Terrain when their turn to do so comes. Once a player has opted to place no more Areas of Terrain, their opponent may place one more, after which they may place no more Areas of Terrain.

To place an Area of Terrain:

- A player chooses a single hex anywhere within the Area of Engagement and places a terrain feature within it.
- They then choose D6+1 additional hexes, all of which must be connected, and place a terrain feature within each, creating an Area of Terrain covering between three and eight hexes. These areas can take any shape.
- Different Areas of Terrain cannot touch one another; there must be at least one hex separating two Areas of Terrain.
- Once an Area of Terrain has been placed, the player that placed it rolls D3+1. This indicates the height of the Area of Terrain. Aircraft can fly over the Area of Terrain provided they are at an Altitude greater than its height.
- When working out if an aircraft has line of sight during the Targeting step of the Firing phase (see Close Quarters on page 59), an Area of Terrain will conceal a target only if the target is both obscured by the Area of Terrain and is travelling at an Altitude equal to or lower than that of the Area of Terrain.

Midnight Skies

The Subterranean Assault scenario uses the rules for Night Fighting (see page 56).

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The attacker scores 5 Victory points for each point of Transport capacity they can land in a landing zone. If the defender destroys or forces any attacking aircraft to disengage, they gain 5 additional Victory points for every point of Transport capacity that aircraft has. If, however, the attacker fails to land any troops in the landing zone, the best they can achieve is a draw.

The game lasts for 12 turns, until one side is forced to disengage, or until only one player has aircraft left operating in the Area of Engagement (Ground Defences do not count).

When the game ends, calculate Victory points to determine the winner.

SKY-FORTRESS ATTACK

A vital enemy aerial asset has been detected, and a sortie has been launched to bring it down. To counter the assault, the enemy has gathered their own airborne forces to fly close support for the asset.

FORCES

Players should mutually agree a points value between 100 points and 250 points and choose their forces accordingly. The defender has an additional 40 points to spend on Ground Defences for the Sky-fortress (see below).

SET-UP

In this scenario, one player is the attacker and the other the defender. The winner of a roll-off decides which they will be.

The defender deploys first, placing all of their aircraft within six hexes of the centre-most hex on the Area of Engagement, and all facing the same direction. Fighters may not be placed on the Sky-fortress. The defender may choose the Speed and Altitude of each aircraft before setting it up.

The attacker's aircraft are set up along the map edge the defender's aircraft are facing, with each of their aircraft in a hex at the edge of the Area of Engagement. The attacker may choose the Altitude of each aircraft before setting it up, but all aircraft must be travelling at Max Speed.

SPECIAL RULES

The Sky-fortress

The attackers are making an assault against an aerial fortress, which could be a floating bastion, a massive but ponderous aircraft, or some other form of skyborne construct. To represent the Sky-fortress mark out the central hex of the Area of Engagement, and each of the hexes surrounding it. These hexes count as Terrain Hexes (see **page 58**) and cannot be crossed by aircraft.

The Sky-fortress can be attacked just as if it was an aircraft. When firing at the Sky-fortress, it always counts as being at the same Altitude as the attacking aircraft. The Sky-fortress has a Structure characteristic of 10. In addition, the Sky-fortress is protected by many layers of armour. When the Sky-fortress suffers a damaging hit from enemy fire, roll a D6. On a 5+, the damage is ignored and the Structure point(s) that would have been lost as a result of the Damage dice are not lost.

The Sky-fortress is also armed with anti-aircraft Ground Defences. These defences are purchased separately by the defender at the beginning of the game and must be placed on any of the hexes that make up the Sky-fortress. They can fire in all directions, i.e., the Sky-fortress itself does not block their line of sight, and to represent their position on the sides of the Sky-fortress, they always count as being at the same Altitude as their target, for both firing and being fired upon, regardless of their Effective Altitude characteristic. These Ground Defences may be attacked, and destroyed, separately from the Sky-fortress. If the Sky-fortress is destroyed, immediately remove any Ground Defences placed on it.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

If the Sky-fortress is destroyed, the attacker earns an additional 50 Victory points.

The game lasts for 12 turns, until the Sky-fortress is destroyed or until only one player has aircraft left operating in the Area of Engagement.

When the game ends, calculate Victory points to determine the winner.



CANYON ATTACK RUN

A highly defended canyon full of vital resources presents an irresistible – if deadly – target for a bomber mission.

FORCES

Players should mutually agree a points value and choose their forces accordingly. The attacker's force should be between 100 points and 200 points. The defender's force should be between 50 points and 150 points. The defender should have 50 points less than the attacker.

The attacker must include one or more aircraft with Air-to-Ground weapons, and may not take any Scouts. The defender may take any force they wish but must include at least one Fighter and one Ground Defence.

SET-UP

This scenario is played on a Rolling Area of Engagement, as described on **page 60**.

The defender places two ground targets with Structure 3 anywhere within the Leading section of the Rolling Area of Engagement.

The attacker deploys first, placing all of their aircraft within six hexes of the Trailing edge of the Rolling Area of Engagement. The defender may set up half of their aircraft (rounding fractions up) within six hexes of the Leading edge of the Rolling Area of Engagement – the rest are held back as Reinforcements, as follows. Ground Defences may be set up in any hex within the Leading section of the Rolling Area of Engagement.

Both players may choose the Speed and Altitude of each aircraft before setting it up.

SPECIAL RULES

Rolling Area of Engagement

This scenario is played on a Rolling Area of Engagement (see **page 60**).

Reinforcements

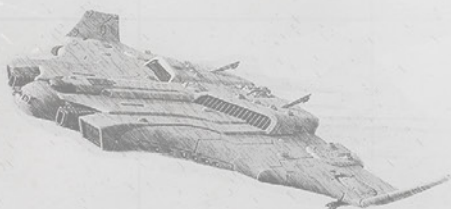
Aircraft held back as Reinforcements are not deployed at the start of the game, but will come on in later turns. To see if aircraft held back as Reinforcements arrive, both players roll a D6 for each of their Reinforcement aircraft at the start of each turn, before the Choose Manoeuvres phase, and consult the table below:

Turn Number	D6 Roll Required
Turn 2	4+
Turn 3-5	3+
Turn 6+	2+

When an aircraft held back as a Reinforcement becomes available, place it within a full hex touching the Trailing edge of the Rolling Area of Engagement. The Reinforcement aircraft automatically enters play with its Speed dial set to its Max Speed. Its Altitude dial may be set as the controlling player wishes:

In the Choose Manoeuvres phase, choose an Ace Manoeuvre for Reinforcement aircraft that have arrived in this way. The aircraft follows all of the normal rules.

Any aircraft held back as Reinforcements that have not entered the Area of Engagement when the game ends count as having Accidentally Disengaged for the purposes of calculating Victory points.



Fighting at Low Altitude

This scenario uses the Fighting at Low Altitude rules (see page 58).

Night Fighting and Bad Weather

If both players agree, the rules for Night Fighting and/or Bad Weather may be used during this game (see page 56).

Reuse and Recycle

When aircraft belonging to the defender are removed due to the Trailing section of the Rolling Area of Engagement being removed, they do not automatically Fall Behind. Roll a D6 for each aircraft. On a 4+, the aircraft does not Fall Behind and is instead immediately placed in Reserve.

Similarly, roll a D6 for each Ground Defence on the Trailing section when it is removed. On a 4+, that Ground Defence may immediately be placed within the new Leading section.

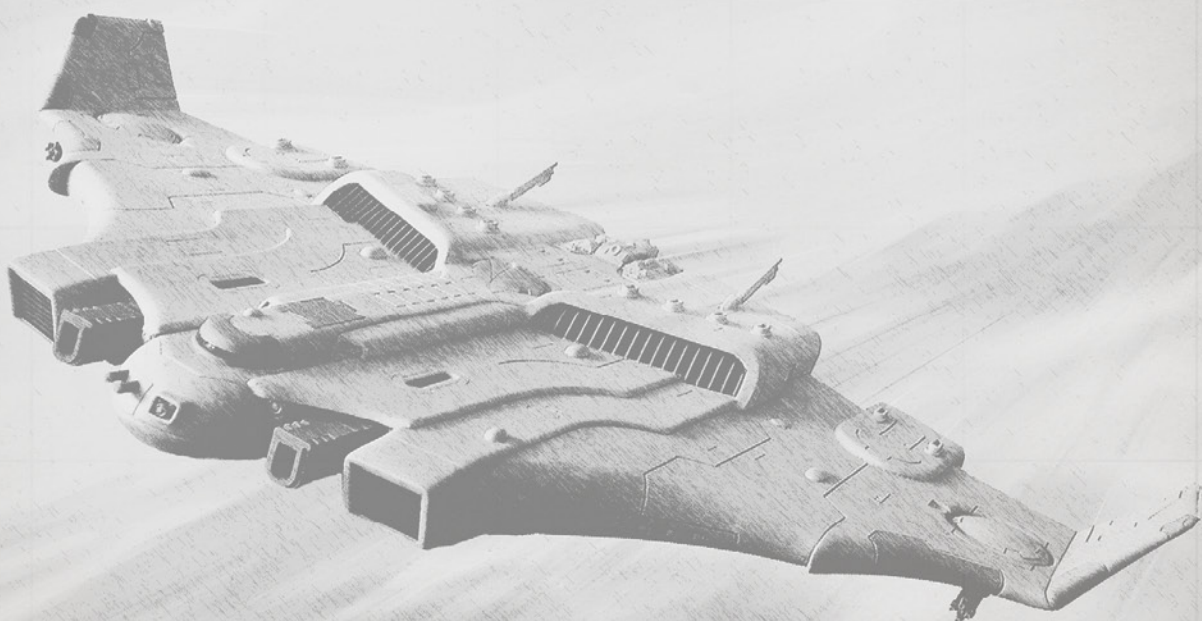
Finally, every time a new Leading section is placed, the defender must place two ground targets with Structure 3 anywhere within it.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The attacker scores 5 additional Victory points for each ground target destroyed before it can be removed when the Trailing section is removed. The defender gains 5 additional Victory points for each ground target that is not destroyed and is removed when the Trailing section is removed.

The game lasts for 12 turns, until one side is forced to disengage, or until only the defender has aircraft left operating in the Area of Engagement.

When the game ends, calculate Victory points to determine the winner.



AERONAUTICA IMPERIALIS CAMPAIGNS

The following section contains rules for linking your games of Aeronautica Imperialis together into a simple campaign, be it recreating the events of the Taros Air War or one of many other long and protracted aerial campaigns of the 41st Millennium. During the course of a short campaign, pilots can rise quickly through the ranks and in notoriety as they become feared and famous Aces, only to fall just as fast in combat!



CAMPAIGN PLAY

One of the most enjoyable and exciting ways to play *Aeronautica Imperialis* is to link games together into a campaign. Other supplements will contain additional rules for recreating famous military campaigns from the 41st Millennium, detailing specific theatres of war, providing maps and information on the forces involved, along with scenarios that allow players to recreate infamous aerial engagements.

Campaigns, however, need not be quite so involved; there is huge fun to be derived from simply playing a series of linked games with friends. The following rules provide a framework to enable players to do just that – tracking the progress of a squadron of rookie pilots through a series of games, with the luckiest of pilots becoming famous and highly-skilled Aces. The rules presented here are identical to those found in the *Rynn's World Air War* supplement, which includes Ace pilot abilities for the Imperial Navy and Ork Air Waaagh!.

SETTING UP THE CAMPAIGN

Setting the campaign up is easy. All that is required are two or more willing players and a desire to play some games of *Aeronautica Imperialis*. How long the campaign runs for is up to the players, but shorter campaigns lasting only a few weeks are recommended – the longer a campaign of this type runs, the greater the risk of participants burning out.

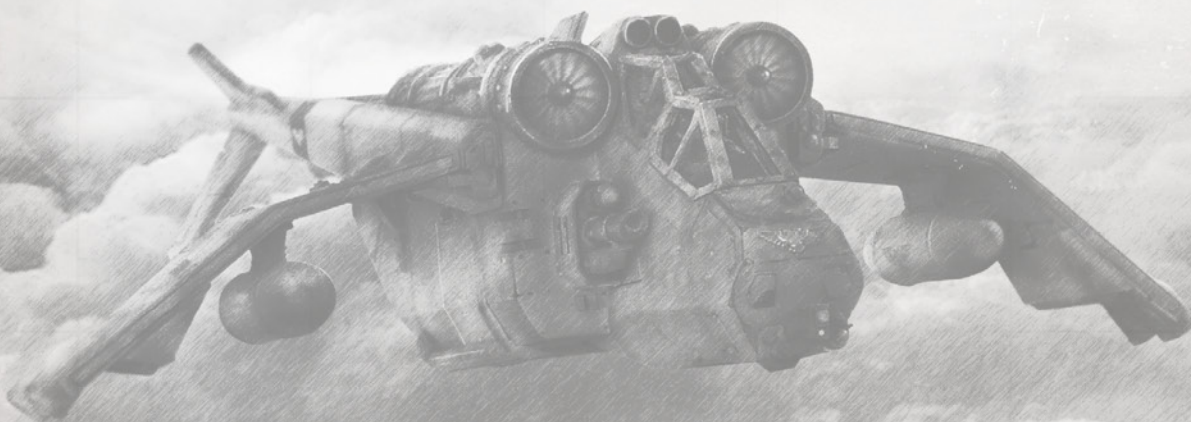
CAMPAIGN SQUADRONS

Each player taking part in the campaign should write out a squadron list. This should be a list of all of the aircraft they are using along with any additional weaponry and any upgrades taken for each aircraft, including the total points cost for each aircraft and for the force as a whole.

It is recommended that a campaign squadron be between 200 points and 250 points, however the full force need not be used for every game – players should decide the points limit to be played ahead of the game and select aircraft from their campaign squadron accordingly.

ATTRITION

During a campaign, players will lose a great many aircraft and pilots as they are shot down and lost in action. For every aircraft lost, a replacement is brought in. Replacement aircraft must be of the same value and be selected from the same Squadron list, but need not be the same type or carry the exact same upgrades or additional weapons. For example, if a player loses an Imperial Lightning Fighter with three additional Skystrike missile upgrades (25 points), they may replace it with an Imperial Lightning Strike Fighter with two additional Skystrike missile upgrades (also 25 points). Replacement aircraft brought in in this way are always rookie pilots.



EXPERIENCED ACES

All aircraft in a campaign squadron start the campaign as rookies, yet to fly their first mission. One aircraft may take the Imperial Ace (see page 76) or T'au Kor'El (see page 86) upgrade, representing the squadron leader – a particularly skilled, but still very inexperienced, pilot.

Pilots gain experience and develop Ace Abilities based on how many games they survive, and gain Kill points to spend on Ace Abilities based on how many enemy aircraft they have shot down during their career.

Experience Level

The greater the number of aerial engagements a pilot survives without being shot down, the more skilled they will become:

Two Games Survived: The pilot becomes an Imperial Ace (see page 76) or a T'au Kor'El (see page 86) for free, ignoring the usual restrictions on this upgrade and gaining a re-roll. If this upgrade has already been purchased, the pilot gains a second re-roll.

Six or more Games Survived: The pilot gains a second re-roll (or third, in the case of an aircraft that has purchased the Imperial Ace or T'au Kor'El upgrades).

Kill Points and Ace Abilities

For every enemy aircraft shot down, the pilot of an aircraft gains 1 Kill point. When a pilot has sufficient Kill points, they may roll on the relevant Ace Abilities table below:

- **5 Kill Points:** First Ace Ability
- **10 Kill Points:** Second Ace Ability

Ace Abilities

When a pilot has sufficient Kill points to gain an Ace Ability, roll a D6 on the appropriate table below, re-rolling any duplicated results.

LUCKY ACES

If an Ace pilot is shot down, there is a chance they will survive to fly again another day.

Roll a D6 for any pilot that has the Imperial Ace or T'au Kor'El upgrade, or that has survived two or more games, or that has earned one or more Ace Abilities, that is shot down during a game. If the result is a 6, the pilot is able to land their aircraft safely. The pilot and aircraft are not lost and will remain a part of the Campaign Squadron.

Astra Militarum Ace Abilities

D6	Ace Ability
1	Eagle-eyed: This aircraft may roll one extra dice when firing at Long range.
2	Out of the Sun: Add 1 to the Initiative roll if this aircraft is at a higher Altitude level than all enemy aircraft during the Initiative phase.
3	Ground Attack Specialist: Once per game, when firing a weapon with the Ground Attack special rule, this aircraft may re-roll any of the Firepower dice that roll a 1 to hit.
4	Quick Start: Whilst this aircraft is hovering at Speed 0, it may improve its Throttle characteristic by 1.
5	Crack Shot: Once per game, after rolling the Firepower dice but before rolling the Damage dice, this aircraft may choose to improve the Damage characteristic of one of its weapons by 1.
6	Stealthy Hunter: Add +1 to all hit rolls made by this aircraft when targeting enemy aircraft at one Altitude level above it.

T'au Air Caste Ace Abilities

D6	Ace Ability
1	Dead-eye: This aircraft may roll one extra dice when firing at Short range.
2	Superior Reactions: Once per game, when this aircraft is activated during the Movement phase, it may discard its Manoeuvre token and immediately choose another Ace Manoeuvre.
3	Defensive Manoeuvre: Once per turn, one enemy aircraft must discard one successful hit dice roll when targeting this aircraft.
4	Cool-headed: Add 1 to the dice roll when testing to recover from a Stall with this aircraft.
5	Hunter: This aircraft may roll one extra dice when resolving Tailing Fire.
6	Enhanced Targeting: Add +1 to all hit rolls made by this aircraft when targeting enemy aircraft travelling at a higher Speed than it.



**Kor'Vre Kais Shau'dan,
Dawn Sword Hunter Cadre**

Shau'dan was part of the reinforcements brought in from Ksi'm'yen to secure the world of T'ros after the human retreat. When the Imperium returned, he would prove the superiority of the Air Caste, often remarking, 'Imperial pilots might visit the sky, but we of the Air Caste live here'.

SQUADRON LISTS

This section introduces a variety of new aircraft for use in Aeronautica Imperialis, providing details of their characteristics, weapon options and special rules. Each entry describes how fast, manoeuvrable and well-armed an aircraft is, as well as detailing any special rules it or its weapons may have and any alternative weapon options available to them.



SQUADRON LISTS

FORCE LIST

When selecting a force for a game, players should write down a list of all of the aircraft they are using, along with any additional weaponry and upgrades taken for each aircraft, including the total points cost for each aircraft, and for the force as a whole.

Alternatively, players can create their force using the Aircraft and Upgrade cards which are available from Games Workshop. These have the added bonus of allowing players to see each aircraft's profile at a glance and to keep track of upgrades and additional weapons purchased for each.

AIRCRAFT UPGRADES

These represent special equipment given to certain aircraft or modifications made to aircraft by their pilots, individualising them to suit their own preferences and unique style. Each race has its own selection of aircraft upgrades to choose from. Most upgrades are available to all aircraft belonging to that race. If however a certain aircraft type may not take a certain upgrade, this will be noted in that aircraft's entry over the following pages (and on its card if you are using the optional Aircraft cards). No aircraft may take more than two upgrades unless stated in that aircraft's profile and no upgrade can be taken twice on the same aircraft unless stated otherwise. Each upgrade costs additional points, increasing the total cost of the aircraft accordingly.



SPECIAL RULES

The following special rules are common to several different types of aircraft:

ROCKET BOOSTERS

In the 41st Millennium, some aircraft are capable of operating beyond a planet's atmosphere in the void of space – such aircraft are noted in the Squadron Lists section as having the Rocket Boosters special rule. An aircraft with Rocket Boosters can choose to disengage from the Area of Engagement from any point, rather than just the table edge (see **page 31**). To do so, the aircraft must be travelling at Altitude 5. Once it has completed its Ace Manoeuvre during the Move and Manoeuvre step of the Movement phase, declare that the aircraft is using its Rocket Boosters to climb once more and disengage.

TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT

Some aircraft have a Transport characteristic shown as a number rather than ¹2. This represents the cargo of troops, vehicles, etc., the aircraft can deliver into a landing zone. To deliver this cargo, a transport aircraft must land (see **page 19**). Landing zones will be designated by the scenario, which will also state how many Victory points are won for delivering this cargo into a landing zone.

For example, an aircraft with a Transport characteristic of 2 may earn 2 Victory points for landing safely in a landing zone.

A player whose mission involves landing troops into a landing zone should keep a tally of Victory points scored in this way. Note that an aircraft can only deliver its Transport characteristic once, i.e., once it has delivered its cargo into a landing zone, an aircraft cannot deliver another cargo during the same game.

VALUABLE CARGO

Some transport craft are not designed for combat. Their role is instead to deliver valuable personnel with a degree of comfort not considered necessary for the average combatant. Such aircraft are only lightly armed, if they are even armed at all. Consequently, they must rely on the close support and protection of assault craft to land safely. Once their cargo has been delivered, they will rapidly exit the combat zone.

Once this aircraft has deployed its cargo, it may Voluntarily Disengage in any turn as if it were the Disengagement turn.

JUMP TROOPS

Some transport aircraft can deliver their cargoes of troops without landing. The troops inside can leap from the aircraft and drop to the ground using jump packs, grav-chutes or jet packs. In the Squadron Lists, some aircraft with Transport capacity will have the option to upgrade their cargoes of troops to Jump Troops.

Instead of landing in a landing zone, a transport aircraft with Jump Troops can drop them from altitude as it passes over. To drop its Jump Troops, the aircraft must pass directly over the landing zone during the Move and Manoeuvre step of the Movement phase. Once the aircraft has completed its movement, before adjusting Altitude roll a D6 for each point of Transport capacity being dropped. If the result of the roll is higher than the aircraft's current Altitude and Speed added together, the Jump Troops land safely within the landing zone and Victory points are scored. If however the result of the roll is equal to or lower than the aircraft's current Speed and Altitude added together, the troops are scattered, injured or killed and no Victory points are scored.

For example, an aircraft travelling at Altitude 2 and Speed 2 will need to roll a 5 or a 6 to land its cargo of Jump Troops safely, whereas a hovering aircraft at Altitude 1 will only fail to land them safely on the roll of a 1.

STEALTH (-X)

Be it due to their small size, high speed, or advanced cloaking systems, some aircraft can appear almost invisible to Ground Defences. Such aircraft can prove difficult, even almost impossible, to track, let alone to target, rendering even the most sophisticated defence systems ineffective against them.

Any weapon with the Ground-to-Air Fire special rule targeting an aircraft with this special rule must reduce its Effective Altitude (X) by the number shown in brackets next to the name of this special rule on the aircraft's profile.

JINK

Whether it is due to the superior artifice of the Adeptus Mechanicus, or heretical xenos technology, there are some aircraft that are undeniably more manoeuvrable than others. Able to alter their flight paths seemingly at will, and in defiance of the laws of physics, such aircraft can prove almost impossible to pin down with weapons fire, whilst showing an almost preternatural ability to be in just the right place at just the right time.

When this aircraft is chosen to fire during the Firing phase, before step 1: Targeting, it may immediately move one hex in any direction. Note, however, that the aircraft may not change its facing, Altitude or Speed after making this move. Nor may this movement take the aircraft into an occupied hex.





IMPERIAL NAVY

The Imperial Navy is huge beyond the comprehension of most; a vast armada of ships spread out across the distant stars. It is the mighty void ships that form the battlefleets of the Imperial Navy that are most renowned, but it is more often the humble atmosphere-bound aircraft that are called upon to defend the Emperor's dominion. Able to engage the enemies of Mankind without obliterating worlds, these aircraft form an essential part of the Imperium's war efforts, and the brave men and women that pilot these craft are lauded as heroes.

IMPERIAL NAVY AIRCRAFT UPGRADES

Ejector Seats +2 points

The aircraft has improved safety mechanisms, allowing the crew to make a quick escape in an emergency. If the aircraft is reduced to 0 Structure points and destroyed for any reason, roll a D6. On a 5+, the crew safely escape and the aircraft is only worth 75% of its total points cost in Victory points, rather than the usual 100%.

Flares or Chaff Launchers +1 point

The aircraft is fitted with decoy flares and chaff launchers, designed to interfere with the guidance systems of incoming missiles. Once per game, roll a D6 for each hit the aircraft suffers from a weapon with an Ammo characteristic of 1, 2 or 3. For each roll of a 6, that hit becomes a miss.

Infra-red Targeting +2 points

The aircraft's targeters and sensors are improved for operating in darkness or poor visibility. If the Night Fighting or Bad Weather rules are in use, this aircraft may fire at Medium range without reducing the number of Firepower dice rolled.

Imperial Ace +5 points

The aircraft is piloted by a renowned Ace pilot. This upgrade may only be taken by one aircraft within a force. Once per game, this aircraft may choose to re-roll a dice roll. However, all of the dice rolled must be re-rolled and the player must accept the result of the second roll, even if it is worse.

Armoured Cockpit +3 points

The aircraft has been fitted with additional armour to protect the crew. For each damaging hit this aircraft suffers from enemy fire, roll a D6. On each roll of a 6, one damaging hit is ignored and the Structure point(s) that would have been lost as a result of the Damage dice are not lost.

AVENGER STRIKE FIGHTER

A superlative ground attack aircraft, the Avenger Strike Fighter is a staple of the Imperial Navy's planetary invasion forces. Named for its primary armament, the Avenger bolt cannon, the Avenger excels at knocking out enemy armour, the massive shells of the bolt cannon able to punch through the weaker side and top armour of a tank with terrifying ease. This is, of course, not to underestimate the Avenger's role in air-to-air combat, where its speed and weaponry make it effective against enemy aircraft, especially when used in combination with other Imperial Navy fighter formations.

AVENGER STRIKE

CLASS: FIGHTER

20
POINTS



STRUCTURE 2

TRANSPORT -

FUEL -

THROTTLE 1

ACE MANOEUVRES 1-6

HANDLING 2+

MIN SPEED 1

MAX SPEED 6

MAX ALTITUDE 4

WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FPR	DMG	AMMO	SPECIAL
Avenger Bolt Cannon	Front	2-5-0	4+	UL	Extra Damage (6+)
Heavy Stubber	Rear, Up	1-1-0	5+	UL	Tail Gunner, Aerial Attack

Pilot
Crew

ADDITIONAL WEAPONRY

Avenger Strike Fighters may be equipped with one additional weapon chosen from the following list at 3 points:

	WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FPR	DMG	AMMO	SPECIAL
	Twin Lascannon	Front	0-2-1	2+	UL	Extra Damage (6+)
	Twin Autocannon	Front	1-3-0	4+	UL	-

Additionally, Avenger Strike Fighters may be equipped with up to two additional weapons chosen from the following list at 2 points each:

	Pair of Hellstrike Missiles	Front	2-2-2	3+	1	Ground Attack, Extra Damage (6+)
	Pair of Skystrike Missiles	Front	0-2-2	3+	1	Aerial Attack, Extra Damage (6+)
	Pair of Wing Bombs	Rear	4-0-0	2+	1	Ground Attack, Extra Damage (5+)

LIGHTNING AND LIGHTNING STRIKE FIGHTER

Lost during the Scouring, the STC patterns for the Lightning Fighter were rediscovered during the Saint-Saen Crusade and quickly entrusted to the forge lords of Cypra Mundi for production. Capable of greater speeds than a Thunderbolt, the Lightning's primary role is engaging enemy aircraft and establishing air superiority over the battlefield. It achieves this through a robust loadout of multi-lasers in the Lightning or lascannon in the Lightning Strike variant, supplemented by wing-mounted missile banks.

Lightning squadrons are primarily based upon orbiting voidships or on rapidly-established forward air bases during prolonged conflicts. In active war zones, squadrons of Lightnings fly patrols, embark on intercept missions and supply fighter cover to Marauder bombing missions. Though no designated size for Lightning squadrons exists, most number two dozen or more at the start of most conflicts in preparation for the inevitable heavy attrition they experience. Surviving members of a squadron are reinforced by newer pilots when circumstances permit, allowing the more experienced to mentor fresh recruits.

LIGHTNING
CLASS: FIGHTER

19
POINTS

Aircraft Upgrades

STRUCTURE	2
TRANSPORT	—
FUEL	—

THROTTLE	3
ACE MANOEUVRES	1-7
HANDLING	3+

MIN SPEED	2
MAX SPEED	8
MAX ALTITUDE	5

Additional Weapons

WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FPR	DMG	AMMO	SPECIAL
Twin Lascannon	Front	0-2-1	2+	UL	Extra Damage (6+)
<i>Upgrade to Lightning Strike for +4 points and replace weapons with:</i>					
Twin Multi-lasers	Front	4-6-2	5+	UL	—

Pilot
Crew

ADDITIONAL WEAPONRY

Lightning Fighters and Lightning Strike Fighters may be equipped with up to three additional weapons chosen from the following list at 2 points each:

	WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FPR	DMG	AMMO	SPECIAL
	Pair of Hellstrike Missiles	Front	2-2-2	3+	1	Ground Attack, Extra Damage (6+)
	Pair of Skystrike Missiles	Front	0-2-2	3+	1	Aerial Attack, Extra Damage (6+)

IMPERIAL ARVUS LIGHTER

The Imperial Arvus Lighter is a workhorse of the Imperial Navy Logistica division. Vital cargoes and important personages are regularly transported in it, when heavy aircraft or land transport would prove impractical or impossible. Often, the Arvus Lighter will find itself in active warzones, bringing officers to the front lines or evacuating high-value wounded. For this reason it is armoured against ground fire, though unarmed, lest its pilots are tempted to treat it like a fighter aircraft. Nonetheless, it has proven popular with air crews for its reliability and range, with many affectionately calling it 'the Hog' or 'the Little Pig', mostly because of its distinctive shape.

As a light Imperium transport, the Arvus Lighter is incredibly robust, able to operate in extreme environments and even from orbit down onto a planet's surface. Sealed against both the vacuum of space and the worst a world's atmosphere can offer, it provides excellent protection for its occupants. In some instances, crews have survived for weeks in the wreckage of a downed Arvus Lighter awaiting rescue, the boxy aircraft acting as a makeshift shelter against the elements until they can return to the fight.

IMPERIAL ARVUS LIGHTER

CLASS: SCOUT SPECIAL RULES: JUMP TROOPS, ROCKET BOOSTERS, VALUABLE CARGO

10 POINTS

STRUCTURE	2	THROTTLE	2	MIN SPEED	1
TRANSPORT	3	ACE MANOEUVRES	1-6	MAX SPEED	6
FUEL	6	HANDLING	3+	MAX ALTITUDE	5

WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FPR	DMG	AMMO	SPECIAL

Pilot

Crew



ASTRA MILITARUM

Vast in scale and scope, the remit of the Astra Militarum is the prosecution of the Emperor's wars across the galaxy, fighting foul xenos and depraved heretics wherever they emerge. Secondment of Imperial Navy craft to ground regiments is common, most frequently in the form of both the Valkyrie and Vendetta gunships. The pilots and their aircraft often adopt the regimental colours of these Imperial Guard units, even though they officially remain part of the Aeronautica Imperialis. This is principally to strengthen the command structures of the Imperium's armies, but also reflects the deep bond that can form between pilots and the troops they carry into battle.

Astra Militarum and Imperial Navy aircraft can be used together in the same force should you wish.

ASTRA MILITARUM AIRCRAFT UPGRADES **Armoured Transport Compartment +2 points**

The aircraft has improved armour, allowing the passengers to survive all but the worst of emergency landings. If the aircraft is reduced to 0 Structure points and destroyed for any reason, roll a D6. On a 5+, the cargo of passengers safely escape and the aircraft is only worth 75% of its total points cost in Victory points, rather than the usual 100%.

Tactical Targeting Array +3 points

The aircraft's standard targeting array has been upgraded significantly, greatly increasing the accuracy of its weapons. Once per game, when targeting an enemy aircraft with Air-to-Air fire, this aircraft may re-roll any of the Firepower dice that roll a 1 to hit.

Flares or Chaff Launchers +1 point

Once per game, roll a D6 for each hit the aircraft suffers from a weapon with an Ammo characteristic of 1, 2 or 3. For each roll of a 6, that hit becomes a miss.

Imperial Ace +5 points

The aircraft is piloted by a renowned Ace pilot. This upgrade may only be taken by one aircraft within a force. Once per game, this aircraft may choose to re-roll a dice roll. However, all of the dice rolled must be re-rolled and the player must accept the result of the second roll, even if it is worse.

Armoured Cockpit +3 points

The aircraft has been fitted with additional armour to protect the crew. For each damaging hit this aircraft suffers from enemy fire, roll a D6. On each roll of a 6, one damaging hit is ignored and the Structure point(s) that would have been lost as a result of the Damage dice are not lost.

VALKYRIE AND VENDETTA ASSAULT CRAFT

Airborne assault carriers, both the Valkyrie and its more heavily armed cousin, the Vendetta, are the primary aircraft of choice for aerial deployments of Astra Militarum infantry and support equipment. As a result of their advanced vector engines, these aircraft are highly manoeuvrable, capable of vertical take-off and landing, while their ability to hover allows accurate troop deployment over a drop zone.

Detachments of Valkyrie or Vendetta Assault Craft will often be assigned alongside Imperial Navy squadrons in preparation for a joint assault. These attack runs will be swiftly followed by squadrons of Valkyries and Vendettas accompanied by Thunderbolts, Lightning and Lightning Strike Fighters, the assault carriers delivering their cargo even as aircraft duel around them. Though not designated a fighter, these aircraft are far from defenceless, sporting lascannon, multi-lasers and rocket pods.

VALKYRIE ASSAULT CRAFT

CLASS: FIGHTER SPECIAL RULES: JUMP TROOPS

16
POINTS



STRUCTURE 3

TRANSPORT 3

FUEL –

THROTTLE 1

ACE MANOEUVRES 1-4

HANDLING 4+

MIN SPEED 0

MAX SPEED 5

MAX ALTITUDE 4

WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FPR	DMG	AMMO	SPECIAL
Lascannon	Front	0-1-1	2+	UL	Extra Damage (6+)
<i>Upgrade to Vendetta Assault Craft for +1 point and replace weapons with:</i>					
Twin Lascannon	Front	0-2-1	2+	UL	Extra Damage (6+)
<i>A Valkyrie may replace its Lascannon as follows for +3 points:</i>					
Multi-laser	Front	2-4-1	5+	UL	–

Pilot
Crew

ADDITIONAL WEAPONRY

Valkyrie and Vendetta Assault Craft may be equipped with one additional weapon chosen from the following list at 2 points:

	WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FPR	DMG	AMMO	SPECIAL
	Twin Rocket Pods	Front	2-6-2	5+	3	–
	Pair of Skystrike Missiles	Front	0-2-2	3+	1	Aerial Attack, Extra Damage (6+)

Alternatively, Valkyrie and Vendetta Assault Craft may be equipped with one additional weapon chosen from the following list at 4 points each:

	Twin-linked Lascannon	Front	0-4-2	2+	UL	Extra Damage (6+)
---	------------------------------	-------	-------	----	----	-------------------

VULTURE GUNSHIP

Squadrons of Valkyrie troop transports will often be accompanied by flights of more heavily armed aircraft such as the Vulture Gunship. A dedicated assault craft, the Vulture sacrifices troop transport for a larger power plant, giving it its distinctive main hull air intake, as well as additional underwing hardpoints and more room for ordnance.

VULTURE GUNSHIP

CLASS: FIGHTER SPECIAL RULES: JINK, ROCKET BOOSTERS

20

POINTS



Aircraft Upgrades

STRUCTURE	2	THROTTLE	2	MIN SPEED	0
TRANSPORT	-	ACE MANOEUVRES	1-8	MAX SPEED	5
FUEL	-	HANDLING	3+	MAX ALTITUDE	5

WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FPR	DMG	AMMO	SPECIAL
Heavy Bolter	Front	2-1-0	5+	UL	-

Additional Weapons

Pilot

Crew

ADDITIONAL WEAPONRY

A Vulture Gunship may be equipped with one additional weapon chosen from the following list for 4 points:

	WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FPR	DMG	AMMO	SPECIAL
	Punisher Cannon	Front	6-10-0	5+	UL	-

Alternatively, a Vulture gunship may be equipped with up to two additional weapons chosen from either of the following lists:

A Vulture may be equipped with up to two additional weapons chosen from the following list for 2 points each:

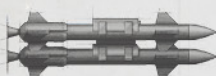


Twin Rocket Pods	Front	2-6-2	5+	3	-
-------------------------	-------	-------	----	---	---

A Vulture may be equipped with up to two additional weapons chosen from the following list for 3 points each:



Hellstrike Missiles Cradle	Front	2-2-2	3+	3	Ground Attack, Extra Damage (6+)
-----------------------------------	-------	-------	----	---	----------------------------------



Skystrike Missiles Cradle	Front	0-2-2	3+	3	Aerial Attack, Extra Damage (6+)
----------------------------------	-------	-------	----	---	----------------------------------

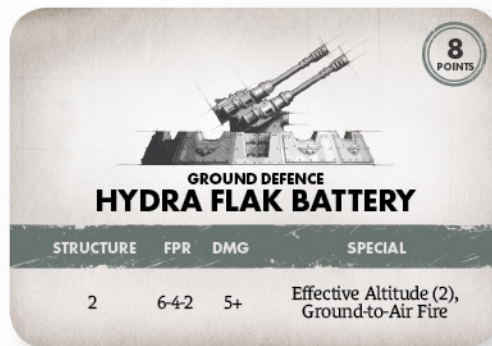


Wing Bombs Cradle	Rear	4-0-0	2+	3	Ground Attack, Extra Damage (5+)
--------------------------	------	-------	----	---	----------------------------------

GROUND DEFENCES

HYDRA FLAK BATTERY

Imperium support weapon platforms are usually deployed as static defences, though many can be seen mounted on armoured carrier chassis, enabling quick redeployment. Used to protect important command posts or forward staging points and supply dumps from hostile aircraft, reinforcing such important battlefield strong points with extra firepower, the most common armaments for such platforms are Hydra flak cannon and Manticore missile launchers. Hydra flak cannon are usually quad-mounted on a weapon platform so that a single such installation becomes a battery of devastating anti-air firepower, capable of filling the low altitude skies above with a storm of lethal shrapnel, creating conditions through which all but the most heavily armoured of aircraft are unable to safely pass.



BASILISK ANTI-AIRCRAFT EMPLACEMENT

A static variant of the ubiquitous Astra Militarum artillery piece, the Basilisk Anti-aircraft Emplacement uses an Earthshaker cannon to target high altitude aircraft. The Basilisk AA can hurl a massive Earthshaker shell up to 8,000 metres into the sky, and uses pressure fuses to ensure it explodes in a cloud of burning shrapnel in the midst of bomber formations, ripping apart airframes and engines. Just one of these emplacements is capable of bringing down even the most heavily armoured aircraft with its firepower, and the Astra Militarum field them in entire batteries. Often dozens of emplacements will be grouped together, where they can fill the sky with a lethal curtain of flak to protect vital ground targets, such as manufactorums and airfields, from enemy attack.



IMPERIAL ACES

FLIGHT COMMANDER MEGANA AYCE

15TH FIGHTER GROUP

When the world of Agrellan fell to the T'au during their expansion into the Damocles Gulf, countless humans became casualties. Among the dead were Megana Ayce's family, caught up in the alien advance. When she learned about the fate of her parents and siblings, Megana was serving in the Aeronautica Imperialis Ultima Segmentum Command as an Air Marshal, commanding the 912th Hellion Fighter Group. Against the wishes of her superiors she took a demotion to Flight Commander, so she could get back in the cockpit and exact her revenge against the xenos. Transferred to the 15th Fighter Group, she had hoped to be in the reconquest force headed to retake Agrellan, but instead ended up on Taros. Nonetheless, Megana was more than happy, as long as she could make the T'au Empire pay.

As a former staff officer, Megana is more than merely a skilled pilot, she brings with her an extensive understanding of aerial tactics. Her fellow Lighting Strike Fighter pilots have learned to follow her lead when she quickly changes formation, or strikes out in an unexpected direction, almost as if she is anticipating the movements of the enemy before they make them.



MEGANA AYCE
FLIGHT COMMANDER

Superior Instincts: Once per game, when a friendly aircraft is activated during the Movement phase, it may discard its Manoeuvre token and immediately choose another Ace Manoeuvre.

'HELLION'
AIRCRAFT: LIGHTNING STRIKE CLASS: FIGHTER



STRUCTURE	2	THROTTLE	3	MIN SPEED	2
TRANSPORT	—	ACE MANOEUVRES	1-7	MAX SPEED	8
FUEL	—	HANDLING	2+	MAX ALTITUDE	5

WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FPR	DMG	AMMO	SPECIAL
Twin Multi-lasers	Front	4-6-2	5+	UL	—

Pilot

The Hellion may take additional weaponry as described on **page 78**, but may not take any other crew or aircraft upgrades.

Your force may include one Hellion piloted by Flight Commander Megana Ayce (in other words, your force cannot include one without the other). Flight Commander Megana Ayce's points cost is included in the points cost of Hellion.

Additional Weapons

26
POINTS

FLIGHT LIEUTENANT DYCE VANDER

119TH DUST DEVILS

A veteran of countless campaigns, Flight Lieutenant Dyce Vander of the 119th Dust Devils has a reputation for getting his passengers into and out of tight spots. There are few things as uplifting to an Imperial infantryman as seeing a Vendetta Gunship's distinctive silhouette against the sky overhead. It means close air support, and the wrath of the Emperor about to be unleashed upon their enemies, or literal deliverance from the hell of battle. This is the salvation Dyce brings, and it is one he has become very good at dispensing.

Attached to the 17/23rd Elysian Drop Troops assault wing during the second Taros war, Dyce braved countless hot landing zones to get troops on the ground. This bravado cost him, and Dyce was wounded no less than eight times in the campaign, each time still getting the job done despite his injuries. This grit is nothing new for Dyce, as on Absolom XII, attached to the Vanaheim 92nd, he had taken a needle round to the knee fighting the Aeldari, while on Cagen Secundus, carrying a crew of Golden Tiger Tempestus Scions, he had to ditch in the middle of an Ork mekyard, only just getting extracted before the Greenskins could reach him and tear him apart. Troops who fly with Dyce learn that no matter how much weapons fire they are taking, they can count on him to get them out of it.



**FLIGHT LIEUTENANT
DYCE VANDER**

Level Head: Once per game, when attempting to deploy Jump Troops into a Landing Zone, this aircraft may re-roll the D6 for each point of Transport capacity being deployed.

'DUST DEVIL'
AIRCRAFT: VENDETTA ASSAULT CRAFT CLASS: FIGHTER SPECIAL RULES: JUMP TROOPS

19 POINTS



STRUCTURE	3	THROTTLE	1	MIN SPEED	0
TRANSPORT	3	ACE MANOEUVRES	1-4	MAX SPEED	5
FUEL	-	HANDLING	3+	MAX ALTITUDE	5

WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FPR	DMG	AMMO	SPECIAL
Twin Lascannon	Front	0-2-1	2+	UL	Extra Damage (6+)

Additional Weapons

Pilot

The Dust Devil may take additional weaponry as described on [page 81](#), but may not take any other crew or aircraft upgrades.

Your force may include one Dust Devil piloted by Flight Lieutenant Dyce Vander (in other words, your force cannot include one without the other). Flight Lieutenant Dyce Vander's points cost is included in the points cost of Dust Devil.



T'AU AIR CASTE

Traditionally serving as messengers in T'au society, the T'au Air Caste evolved into the sole source of pilots and starship crews in the T'au Empire. Evolutionary adaptations displayed by T'au drawn from the Air Caste ensure they are ideal candidates for their role, possessing superior depth perception and situational awareness in addition to a higher tolerance of acceleration than human pilots. Combined with exceptional training and a selfless devotion to the Greater Good, the Air Caste are a formidable foe hampered only by their lack of combat experience compared to experienced pilots of other races.

T'AU AIR CASTE AIRCRAFT UPGRADES

Decoy Drones +1 point

The aircraft is fitted with autonomous drones, designed to misdirect and obfuscate the guidance systems of incoming missiles. Once per game, roll a D6 for each hit the aircraft suffers from a weapon with an Ammo characteristic of 1, 2 or 3. For each roll of a 6, that hit becomes a miss.

Infra-red Targeting +2 points

The aircraft's targeters and sensors are improved for operating in darkness or poor visibility. If the Night Fighting or Bad Weather rules are in use, this aircraft may fire at Medium range without reducing the number of Firepower dice rolled.

Armoured Cockpit +3 points

The aircraft has additional cockpit armour. For each damaging hit this aircraft suffers from enemy fire, roll a D6. On each roll of a 6, one damaging hit is ignored and the Structure point(s) that would have been lost as a result of the Damage dice are not lost.

Defensive Drones +1 point

The aircraft is fitted with drones tasked to fire defensively upon tailing enemy aircraft. Any T'au aircraft fitted with this upgrade gains the following Primary weapon:

WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FPR	DMG	AMMO	SPECIAL
Defensive Drones	Rear	1-0-0	6+	UL	Tail Gunner, Aerial Attack

Kor'El +5 points

The aircraft is piloted by a famed hero of the Air Caste. This upgrade may only be taken by one aircraft within a force. Once per game, this aircraft may choose to re-roll a dice roll. However, all of the dice rolled must be re-rolled and the player must accept the result of the second roll, even if it is worse.

Ionic Afterburners (Barracuda only) +2 points

The aircraft's engines have been upgraded, allowing it to travel at supersonic speeds. Increase this aircraft's Max Speed characteristic to 7 and Throttle characteristic to 3.

BARRACUDA

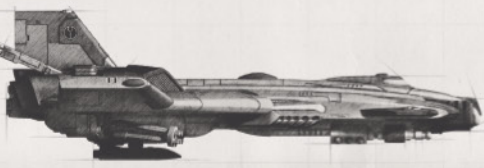
The main air superiority fighter employed by T'au Empire forces, the Barracuda was the primary aircraft encountered during the Taros Air War. Though it lacks the speed of an Imperial Thunderbolt, a Barracuda makes up for this with sophisticated electronic systems, superior manoeuvrability and the natural talent of its Air Caste pilots. Notably, the T'au place greater emphasis on the survival of their aircrew, with each Barracuda equipped with escape pods to ensure a pilot's survival should the aircraft be critically damaged in combat.

A Barracuda is armed as standard with a nose-mounted, pilot-aimed, primary weapon. The weapon itself varies between squadrons. In support, each wing houses a drone-controlled burst cannon that offers an extensive field of fire. To support ground assaults, Barracudas can carry an additional armament of seeker missiles that are guided by a Markerlight operator on the ground, allowing the pilot to focus upon piloting the aircraft.

BARRACUDA AX-5-2

CLASS: FIGHTER SPECIAL RULES: ROCKET BOOSTERS

22
POINTS



STRUCTURE 2

TRANSPORT -

FUEL -

THROTTLE 2

ACE MANOEUVRES 1-7

HANDLING 2+

MIN SPEED 1

MAX SPEED 5

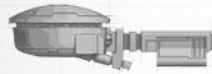
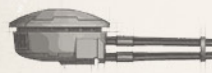
MAX ALTITUDE 5

WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FPR	DMG	AMMO	SPECIAL
Swiftstrike Railgun	Front	0-2-1	2+	UL	Extra Damage (6+)
Missile Pods	Front	1-3-1	4+	UL	Aerial Attack
<i>Upgrade to Barracuda AX-5-3 for +4 points and replace weapons with:</i>					
Swiftstrike Burst Cannon	Front	3-6-3	5+	UL	-
Missile Pods	Front	1-3-1	4+	UL	Aerial Attack
<i>Upgrade to Barracuda AX-5-4 for +1 point and replace weapons with:</i>					
Ion Cannon	Front	1-3-1	4+	UL	Extra Damage (6+)
Missile Pods	Front	1-3-1	4+	UL	Aerial Attack

Pilot
Crew

ADDITIONAL WEAPONRY

Barracuda AX-5-2, AX-5-3 and AX-5-4 Fighters may be equipped with one additional weapon chosen from the following list at 3 points:

	WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FPR	DMG	AMMO	SPECIAL
	Cyclic Ion Blaster Drones	All Round, Down	2-1-0	4+	UL	-
	Long-barreled Burst Cannon Drones	All Round, Down	0-3-2	5+	UL	-

Barracuda AX-5-2, AX-5-3 and AX-5-4 Fighters may be equipped with one additional weapon chosen from the following list at 2 points each:

	Seeker Missile Bay	Front	0-2-2	3+	1	Aerial Attack, Extra Damage (6+)
---	---------------------------	-------	-------	----	---	----------------------------------

TIGER SHARK

Larger and more heavily armed than the Barracuda, the Tiger Shark operates primarily within a ground support role, the T'au's most direct equivalent of the Imperial Marauder Bomber. Faster and more manoeuvrable than the Marauder, the Tiger Shark lacks the extensive bomb racks of its counterpart. Instead, they fulfil their role with their complement of drone racks which are capable of deploying a shower of remote weapon platforms over a battlefield while strafing opposing ground forces with ion cannon and missile pods.

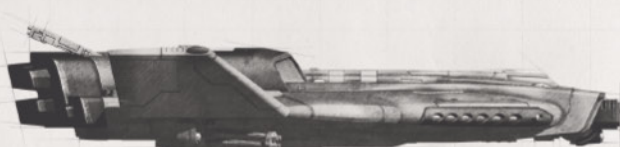
Similar to the Barracuda, the Tiger Shark's wings house drone-controlled burst cannon that offer a measure of defence against aerial threats, although they rarely fly without Barracuda support. Tiger Sharks often operate as a first response force, flying in answer to enemy movements where they deploy drones to halt the enemy advance and delay them until further T'au ground forces can move into place.

TIGER SHARK AX-1-0-2

CLASS: BOMBER SPECIAL RULES: ROCKET BOOSTERS

24

POINTS



Aircraft Upgrades

STRUCTURE 5	THROTTLE 2	MIN SPEED 1
TRANSPORT 2	ACE MANOEUVRES 1-4	MAX SPEED 5
FUEL -	HANDLING 4+	MAX ALTITUDE 5

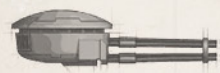
Additional Weapons

WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FPR	DMG	AMMO	SPECIAL
Paired Swiftstrike Railgun	Front	0-3-2	2+	UL	Extra Damage (6+)
Missile Pods	Front	1-3-1	4+	UL	Aerial Attack
<i>Upgrade to Tiger Shark AX-1-0-3 for +8 points and replace weapons with:</i>					
Paired Swiftstrike Burst Cannon	Front	4-9-4	5+	UL	-
Missile Pods	Front	1-3-1	4+	UL	Aerial Attack
<i>Upgrade to Tiger Shark AX-1-0-4 for +2 points and replace weapons with:</i>					
Paired Ion Cannon	Front	2-4-2	4+	UL	Extra Damage (6+)
Missile Pods	Front	1-3-1	4+	UL	Aerial Attack

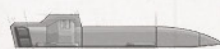
Pilot
Crew

ADDITIONAL WEAPONRY

Tiger Shark AX-1-0-2, AX-1-0-3 and AX-1-0-4 Bombers may be equipped with one additional weapon chosen from the following list at 3 points:

	WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FPR	DMG	AMMO	SPECIAL
	Cyclic Ion Blaster Drones	All Round, Down	2-1-0	4+	UL	-
	Long-barreled Burst Cannon Drones	All Round, Down	0-3-2	5+	UL	-

Tiger Shark AX-1-0-2, AX-1-0-3 and AX-1-0-4 Bombers may be equipped with one additional weapon chosen from the following list at 2 points each:



Seeker Missile Bay

Front

0-2-2

3+

1

Aerial Attack,
Extra Damage (6+)

TIGER SHARK AX-1-0

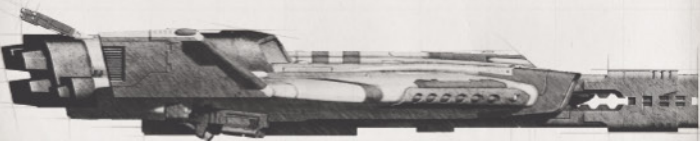
A Titan-killer, the AX-1-0 carries a pair of heavy rail guns capable of punching through the armour of a Battle Titan. As manoeuvrable and well-armoured as its more lightly armed cousin, the AX-1-0 is often accompanied into battle by smaller T'au aircraft such as the Barracuda. These lighter air superiority fighters protect the AX-1-0 while it closes with ground targets, before rupturing their enemies' hulls with devastating strafing runs.

Skilled Air Caste pilots have also become adept at using the AX-1-0 to bring down Imperium bombers, where its super high-velocity rounds make a mockery of anything short of the armour of a Thunderhawk Gunship. Unsurprisingly, the AX-1-0 is a priority target for Imperial pilots, and many Imperium Aces covet the chance to bring one down in aerial combat, often forsaking other targets for the chance to slay such a fearsome beast of the skies.

TIGER SHARK AX-1-0

CLASS: BOMBER SPECIAL RULES: ROCKET BOOSTERS

28
POINTS



Aircraft Upgrades

STRUCTURE 5	THROTTLE 2	MIN SPEED 1
TRANSPORT -	ACE MANOEUVRES 1-4	MAX SPEED 6
FUEL -	HANDLING 4+	MAX ALTITUDE 5

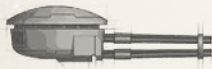
Additional Weapons

WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FPR	DMG	AMMO	SPECIAL
Paired Heavy Rail Cannon	Front	0-2-3	2+	UL	Extra Damage (5+)
Missile Pods	Front	1-3-1	4+	UL	Aerial Attack
<i>An AX-1-0 may replace its Paired Heavy Rail Cannon as follows for +2 points:</i>					
Paired Heavy Plasma Accelerators	Front	4-2-2	3+	UL	Extra Damage (6+)

Pilot
Crew

ADDITIONAL WEAPONRY

Tiger Shark AX-1-0-2, AX-1-0-3 and AX-1-0-4 Bombers may be equipped with one additional weapon chosen from the following list at 3 points:

	WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FPR	DMG	AMMO	SPECIAL
	Cyclic Ion Blaster Drones	All Round, Down	2-1-0	4+	UL	—
	Long-barreled Burst Cannon Drones	All Round, Down	0-3-2	5+	UL	—

REMORA DRONE

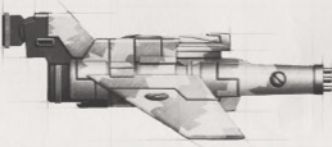
DX-6 'Remora' Stealth Drones are another wonder of the T'au Earth Caste's drone technologies, developed to preserve the lives of T'au Air Caste pilots and operate in environments unsuitable for larger aircraft. A bigger version of the smaller infantry support drones, the Remora incorporates air-to-air and ground-to-air weapons such as burst cannon and seeker missiles, making it equally lethal to both ground targets and enemy aircraft.

The true strength of the Remora is in its role as a scout. Using a stealth field generator similar to those used in T'au Battlesuits, it can fly through enemy territory undetected. Meanwhile, its suite of sensors and markerlights allow it to 'spot' for larger aircraft such as the Tiger Shark, letting them fire their weapons with pinpoint accuracy from kilometres away.

REMORA DRONE

CLASS: SCOUT SPECIAL RULES: STEALTH (-1), JINK

14
POINTS



STRUCTURE 1

TRANSPORT -

FUEL -

THROTTLE 2

ACE MANOEUVRES 1-7

HANDLING 3+

MIN SPEED 0

MAX SPEED 6

MAX ALTITUDE 5

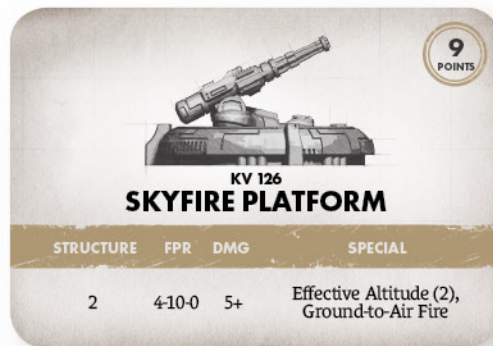
WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FPR	DMG	AMMO	SPECIAL
Burst Cannon	Front	4-2-0	5+	UL	-
Seeker Missiles	Front	1-2-1	3+	2	Extra Damage (6+)

Pilot
Crew

GROUND DEFENCES

KV 126 SKYFIRE PLATFORM

The Fire Caste makes extensive use of anti-aircraft weaponry, often as part of Tidewall defensive positions. Among these, the most common is the Skyfire platform, with its array of burst cannon. Able to unleash a storm of destructive energy, the Skyfire can saturate an area above a T'au gun line, ripping apart any pilot foolish enough to fly into it. Skyfire platforms are also adept at precision bursts, using markerlight drones to 'paint' potential targets for the cannon to track. In this way, an enemy pilot will often find themselves 'marked' by a group of drones as they race over T'au territory, not realising the danger they are in until burst cannon fire erupts from below with unerring accuracy, leaving any trailing T'au craft to fly on to their next target.



KV 129 STORMFURY PLATFORM

The Stormfury incorporates a twin rail gun array and its primary role is to fire at high altitude targets, the cannon adapted from versions found on T'au tanks such as the Hammerhead. These immensely powerful guns do not rely upon saturation or flak shells like more primitive heavy AA, such as the Imperial Basilisk. Instead, sophisticated AI systems within the Stormfury calculate velocities and vectors before sending a shot screaming skyward. The result is a rail gun round that will cross the distance between ground and aircraft in mere seconds, before smashing through the hull of a distant aircraft with devastating effect.



T'AU ACES

KOR'LA KAE O'AR

RED HORIZON HUNTER CADRE

In the T'au Empire, citizens are often born into the role they fulfil for the Greater Good. So it was for Kae. As a member of the Air Caste her fate was always going to be played out among the stars or in the atmosphere above an alien world, and when the Third Sphere Expansion enveloped T'ros, she followed her kind to settle this new addition to the empire. Before the arrival of the Gue'la invasion fleet, Kae's flight experience was entirely simulated, the pilot having worked her way up from flying civilian aircraft to fighters such as the Barracuda AX-5-2, but even so, T'au simulators grant their warriors almost near perfect combat experiences without any risk to life or limb. When war came to T'ros, Kae immediately joined the Red Horizon Hunter Cadre, eager to test her skills in the field. Fortunately for Kae, it turned out she had a talent for aerial combat even by the standards of her Caste.

Kae flies with the exacting precision she learned in the combat simulators, examining vectors and flight paths with cold probability, before committing to the one that offers the highest chance of success. It is a method that has seen her rise swiftly in the ranks of her Hunter Cadre, and seen dozens of Imperium pilots torn from the sky.



TARGET REF: 1291730

KAE O'AR

Master Navigator: Once per game, after completing its movement, you may move this aircraft one hex in any direction, effectively allowing you to adjust its final position (but not its facing).

'RED HORIZON'

AIRCRAFT: BARRACUDA AX-5-2 CLASS: FIGHTER SPECIAL RULES: ROCKET BOOSTERS

24 POINTS



STRUCTURE	2	THROTTLE	3	MIN SPEED	1
TRANSPORT	—	ACE MANOEUVRES	1-7	MAX SPEED	5
FUEL	—	HANDLING	2+	MAX ALTITUDE	5

WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FPR	DMG	AMMO	SPECIAL
Swiftstrike Railgun	Front	0-2-1	2+	UL	Extra Damage (6+)
Missile Pods	Front	1-3-1	4+	UL	Aerial Attack

Pilot

Additional Weapons

The Red Horizon may take additional weaponry as described on **page 87**, but may not take any other crew or aircraft upgrades.

Your force may include one Red Horizon piloted by Kor'La Kae O'ar (in other words, your force cannot include one without the other). Kor'La Kae O'ar's points cost is included in the points cost of Red Horizon.

KOR'LA DOR'N O'KA

DAWN SWORD HUNTER CADRE

Not all T'au are made for war, though the Greater Good demands their sacrifice all the same. Dor'n of the Air Caste was a civilian system pilot when the Imperium invaded T'ros, serving the near-orbit mining installations around the upper reaches of the Supremacy of Earth and Air. As casualties among the T'au Air Caste mounted, he was conscripted to fly Tiger Shark bombers in the Dawn Sword Hunter Cadre. Dor'n proved to be a competent pilot, the natural gifts of his Caste and his training allowing him to ably command a Tiger Shark while his co-pilot handled the weapon systems. His true talents revealed themselves as the war dragged on, not as an exceptional pilot, or a fearless warrior, but rather as an exceptionally lucky one.

Over Tarokeen when his aircraft was ploughed into by an out of control Imperium fighter, he somehow walked away from the wreckage without a scratch, despite his ejector pod having failed. Later, in the aerial battles over the Broken Ridge, Hydra battery fire cut apart his Tiger Shark, killing his co-pilot and destroying both its engines, but again Dor'n survived unharmed. When Dor'n's third co-pilot was killed in the retreat to the Furnace, other members of the Air Caste refused to fly with him, and to take to skies Dor'n was forced to fly a Tiger Shark with slaved AI systems. Nonetheless, he has kept on flying for the Greater Good, and continued to prove the ancient axiom: if you can't be good, just be lucky.



TARGET REF. 0983.21

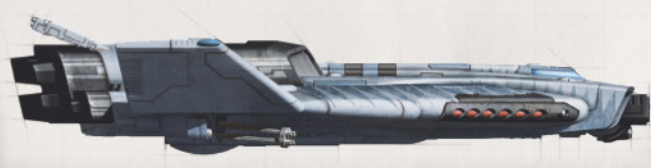
DOR'N O'KA

Evasive: Once per turn, when this aircraft suffers a damaging hit, roll a D6. On a 5+, the damage is ignored and the Structure point(s) are not lost.

'DAWN SWORD'

AIRCRAFT: TIGER SHARK AX-1-0-4 CLASS: BOMBER SPECIAL RULES: ROCKET BOOSTERS

28 POINTS



STRUCTURE	5	THROTTLE	2	MIN SPEED	1
TRANSPORT	2	ACE MANOEUVRES	1-4	MAX SPEED	5
FUEL	-	HANDLING	3+	MAX ALTITUDE	5

WEAPON	FIRE ARC	FPR	DMG	AMMO	SPECIAL
Paired Ion Cannon	Front	2-4-2	4+	UL	Extra Damage (6+)
Missile Pods	Front	1-3-1	4+	UL	Aerial Attack

Pilot

Additional Weapons

The Dawn Sword may take additional weaponry as described on [page 89](#), but may not take any other crew or aircraft upgrades.

Your force may include one Dawn Sword piloted by Kor'La Dor'n O'ka (in other words, your force cannot include one without the other). Kor'La Dor'n O'ka's points cost is included in the points cost of Dawn Sword.

QUICK REFERENCE

TURN SUMMARY

A turn is split into phases. Each separate phase is completed before moving on to the next phase. Once all of the phases are complete, the turn ends and a new turn begins. A single turn plays as follows:

1. Choose Manoeuvres
2. Initiative
3. Tailing Fire
4. Movement
5. Firing
6. End Phase

1. Choose Manoeuvres: Choose an Ace Manoeuvre for each eligible aircraft and place a Manoeuvre token face-down next to the model's base. Every aircraft needs an Ace Manoeuvre unless it is in a Spin.

2. Initiative: Both players roll a D6. The player with the highest score wins the initiative this turn.

3. Tailing Fire: Aircraft that are Tailing another aircraft may fire at the tailed aircraft. The player with the initiative chooses an aircraft and fires first.

4. Movement: The player with the initiative chooses who goes first. Players then alternate choosing and moving aircraft until all aircraft have moved.

5. Firing: The player that moved first fires first. Players then alternate, choosing an aircraft and firing all of its available weapons until all eligible aircraft that the players wish to fire have done so.

6. End Phase: Starting with the player with the initiative, both players attempt to recover aircraft that are Stalled or in a Spin. Tailing is also determined now. If this is the last turn of the game, determine Victory conditions.

THE MOVEMENT PHASE

The Movement phase is split into a sequence of steps. Each player follows this sequence as they move an aircraft. Players then alternate choosing and moving aircraft until all aircraft have moved. If one player has more aircraft to move, their remaining aircraft are moved one after another after their opponent has moved their last aircraft. When every eligible aircraft on the tabletop has been moved, the Movement phase ends.

The player with the initiative will decide which player goes first in the Movement phase, opting to move one of their own aircraft or making their opponent move an aircraft first.

Each aircraft follows the same sequence:

1. Throttle
2. Move & Manoeuvre
3. Adjust Altitude

1. Throttle: Use the aircraft's Throttle characteristic to adjust its Speed.

2. Move & Manoeuvre: Move the aircraft using the Ace Manoeuvres diagrams as a guide – the distance between each stage of the manoeuvre can vary depending upon the Speed at which the aircraft is travelling. Move & Manoeuvre is covered in more detail on [page 16](#).

3. Adjust Altitude: After an aircraft has completed its movement, it can adjust its Altitude to represent the aircraft climbing or diving as it manoeuvres.



THE FIRING PHASE

The Firing phase is split into a sequence of steps. Each player follows this sequence, with the player that moved first firing first. Players then alternate choosing and firing with aircraft until all aircraft have fired. If one player has more aircraft to fire, their remaining aircraft fire one after another after their opponent has fired their last aircraft. When every aircraft on the tabletop has fired, the Firing phase ends.

All aircraft follow the same sequence of steps when firing:

1. Targeting
2. Firepower
3. Ammo
4. Damage

1. Targeting: Players select targets for the aircraft to fire upon and determine if they are able to do so, checking Fire Arcs and Range, as described in more detail on pages 21 & 22.

2. Firepower: Players determine how many Firepower dice are rolled and the score required to hit on each then roll to hit. A weapon's Firepower characteristic is the number of D6s rolled when that weapon fires at that range. To determine how many hits are scored, roll the Firepower dice.

The D6 roll required to hit a target with Air-to-Air fire is always 5+.

The following modifiers may also apply to the dice roll:

- -1 to the dice roll if the target has a Stall or Spin token on it.
- -1 to the dice roll per level of Altitude difference between the firing aircraft and its target.
- -1 to the dice roll if the firing aircraft has a Stall token on it.

3. Ammo: If the weapon has an Ammo characteristic of 1, 2 or 3, reduce the Ammo characteristic by 1 every time the weapon is fired.

4. Damage: If any hits were scored, those dice are rolled again as Damage dice to determine if the target will lose any Structure points. Each weapon has a Damage characteristic – this is the score required on the Damage dice to cause Damage.

THE END PHASE

The End phase is split into a sequence of steps.

Both players, starting with the player who holds the initiative, run through this sequence for all of their aircraft:

1. Stalled Aircraft
2. Recovering from a Spin
3. Determine Tailing
4. Ending the Game

1. Stalled Aircraft: Roll a D6 for each Stalled aircraft. If the score is equal to or higher than the aircraft's Handling characteristic, it will recover. Otherwise, the aircraft will fall into a Spin.

2. Recovering from a Spin: Roll a D6 for each aircraft that has fallen into a Spin. If the score is equal to or higher than the aircraft's Handling characteristic, it will recover. Otherwise, the aircraft will continue to Spin.

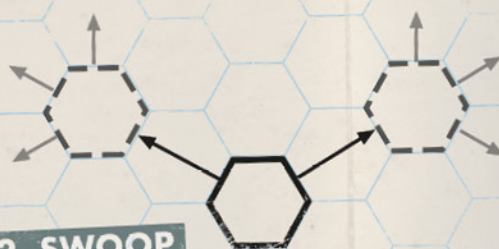
3. Determine Tailing: Players determine if any of their aircraft are in a position to fire on enemy aircraft in the Tailing Fire phase of the following turn.

4. Ending the Game: If this is the End phase of the final turn, or if only one player has aircraft left in the Area of Engagement, the game ends and players work out victory conditions.

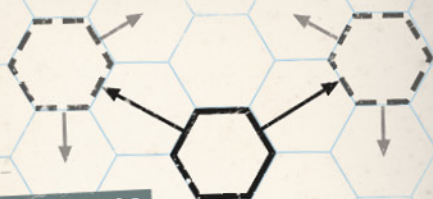
1. LEVEL FLIGHT



2. SWOOP



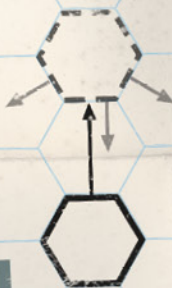
3. TURN



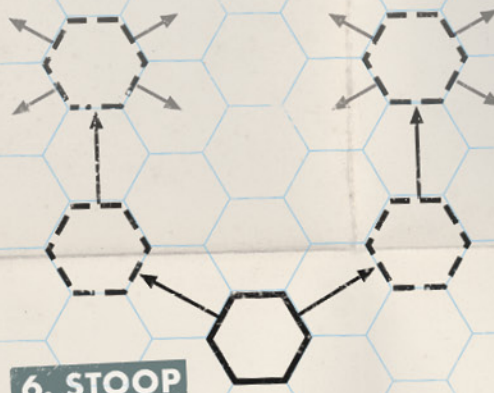
4. SNAP TURN



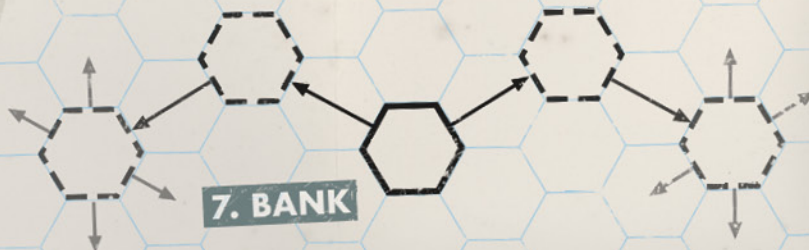
5. STALL TURN



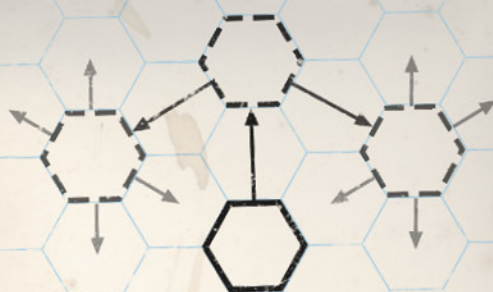
6. STOOP



7. BANK



8. WING OVER



MOVEMENT DIAGRAMS

Approved Aircraft Manoeuvres, Imperial Navy Pilot Training. (Failure to heed by these protocols will result in revocation of flight status and summary execution)