

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	3	FORCES OF THE TAU EMPIRE (CONTINUED)	
A NEW EMPIRE DAWNS.....	6	Sky Ray Gunships.....	51
The Rise of the Tau.....	8	Kroot Carnivore Squads	52
Contact with the Imperium.....	14	Vespid Stingwings.....	54
A New Age of Ascendancy.....	17	Drone Squadrons.....	55
A Growing Empire.....	20	Commander Farsight.....	56
Art of War.....	22	Commander Shadowsun	58
Fire Caste Organisation.....	24	Aun'Va.....	60
Language and Culture.....	26	Longstrike.....	62
March of Conquest.....	28	Darkstrider	63
Time of the New Beginning.....	30	Aun'Shi.....	64
FORCES OF THE TAU EMPIRE.....	32	ARSENAL OF EXPANSION.....	65
Warlord Traits.....	32	Melee Weapons.....	65
Drones.....	33	Ranged Weapons	65
Commanders.....	34	Support Systems.....	68
Ethereals.....	35	Armour	70
Cadre Fireblades	36	Vehicle Battle Systems	72
Fire Warriors	37	Signature Systems	73
Pathfinders	38	WARRIORS OF THE GREATER GOOD	76
Devilfish	39	ARMY OF THE THIRD SPHERE	94
XV8 Crisis Battlesuits		Tau Empire Wargear List.....	95
(XV8 Crisis Teams & Crisis Bodyguard Teams)	40	HQ.....	96
XV88 Broadside Teams	42	Troops.....	99
Stealth Teams.....	43	Dedicated Transport.....	99
XV104 Riptides	44	Elites	100
Sniper Drone Teams	46	Fast Attack	101
Piranhas.....	47	Heavy Support.....	103
Sun Shark Bombers	48	REFERENCE	104
Razorshark Strike Fighters	49		
Hammerhead Gunships	50		

Written by: Jeremy Vetock Cover Art: Raymond Swanland

Art, Design, Production and Reprographics
by the Games Workshop Design Studio

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WWW.GAMES-WORKSHOP.COM

UK
Games Workshop Ltd,
Willow Rd, Lenton,
Nottingham,
NG7 2WS

NORTHERN EUROPE
Games Workshop Ltd,
Willow Rd, Lenton,
Nottingham,
NG7 2WS

NORTH AMERICA
Games Workshop Inc.,
6211 East Holmes Road,
Memphis,
Tennessee 38141

AUSTRALIA
Games Workshop,
23 Liverpool Street,
Ingleburn,
NSW 2565

INTRODUCTION

On the galaxy's Eastern Fringe a new Empire is rising. Ambitious and united in purpose, the Tau seek to spread their enlightened ways across the galaxy, believing that now is their time to rule. Those who do not willingly bow down to the Greater Good of the Tau Empire must be shown the error of their ways.

FOR THE GREATER GOOD

The Tau are an alien race seeking to carve its own realm into the havoc-filled galaxy of the 41st Millennium. They mean to bring a new way to a barbaric and unordered universe. Many races have already joined their cause, and in time even those that resist are shown the light. Their cause – known to the Tau as the Greater Good – requires all individuals to set aside their own desires and cooperate for the benefit of their growing Empire. They believe there is no foe their technology cannot overcome and no quandary their science cannot resolve. If needs be, even the stars will be moved for the Greater Good.

WARHAMMER 40,000

If you are reading this codex, then you have already taken your first steps into the Warhammer 40,000 hobby. The *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook contains all the rules you need to fight battles with your Citadel miniatures, and every army has its own codex that acts as a definitive guide to collecting and unleashing it upon the tabletop battlefields of the Warhammer 40,000 universe. This codex allows you to turn your collection of Tau Empire models into a Hunter Cadre ready to do battle for the Greater Good.

THE TAU ARMY

A stylish and powerful army, none can match the sophisticated weaponry and high tech gear of the Tau Empire. To achieve victory, a Commander must use his diverse elements in a combined fashion. A gunline supported by anti-grav tanks, drones and alien auxiliaries will hold the foe at bay so that they'll never see the killing blow coming. Battlesuits – mobile suits of armour bristling with deadly weaponry, the apex of Tau technology – airdrop from on high in support of the foot soldiers advancing below. Through such harmony comes devastation.

HOW THIS CODEX WORKS

Codex: Tau Empire contains everything you need to play a game of Warhammer 40,000 with your army. Within these pages you will find the origins of the Tau, their caste system, their many battles of expansion and the rise of their ever-growing Empire. You will also find the rules to use the powerful heroes, units, vehicles and even advanced prototype equipment at your disposal. There is also an army list that enables you to organise your collection of Citadel miniatures into a worthy army. Finally, you will find a showcase of fantastically painted Tau Empire miniatures, replete with examples of markings, camouflage patterns and colour schemes employed by the many Tau septs.







'STRANGER, I BID YOU GREETINGS IN THE NAME OF THE TAU.

IF YOU ARE READING THIS, THEN YOU WILL HAVE ENCOUNTERED ONE OF OUR MESSENGER DRONES AND ARE THEREFORE A SPACEFARING RACE. YOU WILL SOON SEE MORE EVIDENCE OF US; THIS IS NO CAUSE FOR ALARM.

WHEN YOU ENCOUNTER ONE OF OUR SHIPS OR OUTPOSTS, THEN WELCOME IT. WE HAVE MUCH TO OFFER A FAITHFUL FRIEND. WE ARE FIVE CASTES, ONE PEOPLE. ALL ARE BOUND TO THE DREAM OF BRINGING A NEW AND BETTER WAY TO THE UNIVERSE. ALL ARE WORKING TOWARDS THE GREATER GOOD.

I HOPE YOU WILL CHOOSE TO SHARE THE CULTURE, TECHNOLOGY AND PROTECTION OF THE TAU EMPIRE.

THE WISE LEARN TO ADAPT TO CHANGE.

BELIEVE IN OUR DESTINY.'

- TRANSCRIPT FROM ALIEN PROBE DISCOVERED IN KOATH SYSTEM, 696.M41



A NEW EMPIRE DAWNS

On the eastern fringes of the galaxy, there is a new power on the rise. The Tau Empire is spreading; its boundless ambitions have yet to be checked. Although world after world have been subsumed under their control, the Tau believe it is only the start of their new unified order, for it is their destiny to rule, and none have the right to deny their progress across the stars.

Like a newborn sun spreading its light into the darkness, the Tau Empire radiates outwards, its power ever growing. The Tau are a dynamic race, whose unity of purpose and superb grasp of technology have enabled them to make rapid advances. Where once the Tau looked up to see the distant pinpricks of unexplored stars, now they see the shimmering lights of their own interstellar empire.

In their expansions, the Tau have planted thriving colonies where before there was only desolation. In their wisdom, they have transformed lifeless and poisonous orbs into fecund worlds capable of supporting burgeoning populations. Artificial planets, orbital docks and strings of relay stations now light interstellar pathways all across what was once the empty blackness of space. Although considered upstarts and fledglings by the elder powers of the galaxy, the Tau have supreme confidence in themselves and see only the unfolding of the natural order of things. New stars are born out of swirling nebula, replacing those suns that collapse or blaze out in supernovas. So too do empires rise and fall.

MANIFEST DESTINY

The Tau believe that their destiny is to rule and that the time to do so is now. They fully accept the superiority of their culture and technology, and have recognised that they are the only hope of bringing an enlightened philosophy to a bleak, barren and backwards galaxy. There is no feat beyond the range of their engineering, no quandary that their scientists cannot solve and no foe that their warriors cannot overcome. In time, all other races will come to accept these truths, and the very stars will be reshaped and realigned in the name of the only cause that ever mattered.

A strong ideological concept drives the Tau – Tau'va – which translates as 'the Greater Good', a phrase that means the good of the many (society) is greater than the good of the few (the individual). That one must set aside personal desires to work for the Greater Good is of prime concern to the Tau and it is impossible to underplay the importance of this ideal – all working together to achieve the advancement of the whole society.

RELENTLESS DRIVE

The Tau Empire continues to grow, stretching outwards in ever-increasing bands. This continual expansion ensures that the Tau regularly encroach into already occupied territory, where they encounter much ignorance and hostility. However, this has not dissuaded them from their mission. If anything, each conflict only strengthens the Tau's collective will and lends further clarity to their purpose.

Although the Tau seek to annex all territory and assimilate any alien races they discover, they attempt to do so through enticement, rather than subjugation. The Tau have become masters of diplomacy – offering great rewards for those who acquiesce. In these matters the Tau are patient, content for the incorporation process to take years, or even decades, until an alien world is fully subsumed. Oftentimes, Tau rule is so subtly insinuated that the natives even assume it was their idea. However, if resistance is encountered, negotiations quickly grow more aggressive in nature. If these do not proceed in a satisfactory manner for the Tau, the talks are swiftly replaced with a purely military solution.

The military apparatus of the Tau is a finely tuned instrument of death. Their warrior caste is prepared for battle from birth. Each soldier is equipped with hi-tech weaponry and is unquestionably committed to the cause of the Greater Good. Their elite troops wear advanced battlesuits that bristle with fearsome arrays of firepower. A combined arms force, their mechanised infantry and gravity-defying gunships work in deadly cohesion while their air fleet dominates the skies above. Tau Commanders are master tacticians, well versed in the arts of war. Thus far, the expansions of the Tau Empire are only rarely so much as slowed, and they have never been stopped.



THE CASTE SYSTEM

So completely have the Tau absorbed the concept of the Greater Good that it has come to shape not just their purpose, but also their race's physical appearance. Since the time of their prehistory (known as the Mont'au or 'death age'), the Tau have been divided into rigid castes, with each segment responsible for specific functions within society – each caste contributing its expertise to the almighty whole.

All Tau are humanoid in shape, with two large hoof-like toes and blue-grey leathery skin, although the exact tone can vary, growing more blue based on a colony's proximity to the sun. Over time, each of the Tau castes has further evolved to better meet the requirements associated with their roles, effectively developing into a subspecies within the larger Tau race. Tau are born into their caste and interbreeding across these distinct classes is outlawed by the Ethereals, the mysterious fifth caste that are the leaders of the Tau Empire. The castes are as follows:



Fire Caste: The Fire caste provides the warriors of the Tau. It is the duty of these soldiers to protect the other castes and to eliminate any foes foolish enough to oppose the will of the

Tau Empire. Long ago the Fire caste originated from the hunter tribes of the plains, and even then they were already the strongest and most aggressive of all the Tau. Through the years, the Fire caste's desirable traits of strength and physical size have continued to increase, and any weak strains are quickly weeded out. They are guided by the Code of Fire, which translates loosely as 'the ways of the warrior'. It stresses martial arts, loyalty, and merciless war tempered by wisdom. The Fire Warriors spend their entire lifetimes in battle or preparing for it, constantly honing their tactics and relentlessly working to improve their battle skills.



Earth Caste: The Earth caste contains the artisans, builders and workers of the Tau, and is by far the most numerous of the castes. It is they who construct the machines, erect dwellings and provide food for the rest of the Tau Empire. Without the

Earth caste, the farms would not produce and factories would sit idle. The menial levels of the Earth caste are sturdy labourers who toil ceaselessly. The foremost minds of the caste become engineers and scientists, inventors beyond compare. It is they who build the sophisticated machinery and create the many technological innovations that are so prevalent throughout all levels of society in the Tau Empire.



Water Caste: Water is the element that can be found in all living things, flowing continuously to allow life to function. So it is that Water caste members are bureaucrats, politicians, negotiators

and administrators – in essence, they are the civil servants that make Tau society run smoothly. The Water caste make up the merchants, traders and diplomats – moving fluidly among the other castes and any aliens incorporated into the Tau Empire. They assuage fears and ensure all negotiations are handled with great efficiency. This subset of the Tau has always displayed a gift for linguistics that has become even further developed over time. The Water caste are able to learn alien languages with ease and show a remarkable ability to pick up and emulate even the subtlest of communication nuances.



Air Caste: In ancient times, the Tau of the Air caste were messengers, but they now fill the role of pilots and spaceship crews, transporting goods and warriors to where they are needed. The Air

caste are the unseen force (sometimes called the invisible caste) for they rarely, if ever, set foot upon planets – most Air caste members spend the majority of their lives in space transit or docked upon space stations. Their bodies have evolved to their new circumstances, no longer bearing wings as they once did, but instead exhibiting longer and lighter frames in response to their low gravity existence. Hollow bones allow the pilots of the Air caste to withstand great acceleration, although they are conversely weak and ungainly when on worlds with even moderate gravity. In battle, the Air caste can rain death from the skies while crewing either skyborne attack fighters or bomber craft in support of the planet-bound Fire Warriors.



Ethereal Caste: Ethereals are the unquestioned leaders of the united castes that make up the Tau Empire. Their unique role is a combination of spiritual and political command, and their declarations shape and steer every facet of the

Tau Empire in an indisputably complete way – and they have absolute authority. Were an Ethereal to order a Tau to kill himself, he would be met with instant obedience.

'OUR CONQUEST IS INEVITABLE, OUR ASCENSION A MATTER OF TIME. LET NONE WHO ARE WISE DENY OUR DESTINY.'

- AUN'VA, ETHEREAL SUPREME

THE RISE OF THE TAU

The Tau say 'from out of darkness bursts the light', a phrase in their language that is laden with meaning – referring at once to the sudden and dramatic sunrise typical of the planet T'au, of the legends told of the coming of the Ethereals, and of the vigorous surge of expansionism that even now is spreading further out into the blackness of the galaxy.

Near the Eastern Fringe of the galaxy lies the small planet of T'au. It is an arid world with a few lush areas and shallow oceans. The planet is dominated by a massive continent, whose lands are composed of game-rich savannahs and sweeping plains, broken by patches of rocky desert. Long before the Tau took to the stars, they began as hunters on these plains, and as their tribes grew, they spread across the lands following migrating game, avoiding natural disasters, and seeking to escape growing rivalries. As the centuries passed, each branch of the dispersed Tau began developing in their own way, displaying a unique talent for adapting to their chosen environment.

High on isolated mountain peaks, some soared on thermals, rising up from the hot plains on thin membranous wings; these found plentiful employment amongst the other Tau as messengers and scouts. Those whose migrations carried them to the river valleys began establishing well-constructed farming communities, developing their metallurgical, tool-making and mining skills to create the first settlements. Others realised that different communities could produce

what they could not, and negotiated trade agreements between the disparate tribes, recognising the inherent value in each others' talents. The Tau who remained on the plains grew stronger, becoming skilful and aggressive hunters. They took what they wanted and if they had to fight in honourable battle to get it, so much the better.

ADVANCED EVOLUTION

The story of evolution from stone tools to a more advanced society is a common enough tale throughout the galaxy. What makes the Tau story notable is the speed at which their culture leapt from stage to stage. It was not many generations after they established their first settlements that the Tau began building fortresses and using combustion firearms to defend them from marauding tribes of plains dwellers allied with the Tau of the air.

Trade routes were cut and the Tau who negotiated between the various tribes were attacked to prevent alliances from being formed. Soon, vast intertribal wars ravaged the main



continent, with Tau tribes turning on each other in savage battles utilising primitive firearms. The fighting dragged on for many years, thousands dying on every side with no end to the slaughter in sight. Squalid conditions caused by the fighting and a lack of fresh food and water allowed plagues to spread until more Tau were dying of disease than were being killed in battle. As the savagery of the fighting escalated, it seemed as though the Tau race would surely extinguish itself in the fires of its own barbarity.

THE COMING OF THE ETHEREALS

The Tau had entered their darkest age, when the entire race was being destroyed by war and disease. At this time, strange lights were seen in the sky and many believed these were signs that they were living in the last days – that extinction was nigh. From these times come many different myths of how the race was pulled back from the brink of annihilation, of which 'The Ethereals of Fio'taun' is the foremost.

The legend tells that on a mountain plateau called Fio'taun, an alliance of plains dwellers and airborne Tau laid siege to the mightiest walled city of the builder Tau, a great fortress citadel. In vain, the traders attempted to negotiate with the fierce plains warriors – but their blood was afire and they would brook no treaty, save for the kind delivered from the end of a rifle. For five long seasons the cannons of Fio'taun held the attackers at bay, but supplies were low and disease was rife within the city walls. As night fell upon another bloody day's fighting, the leaders within Fio'taun were in despair, little knowing that succour was on the way.

Emerging from the darkness, a Tau of unusual appearance walked into the besiegers' camp, asking to see the army's commander. He was softly spoken, yet it is said that he bore an undeniable authority, and the sentries to whom he had announced himself found themselves compelled to escort him to their leader. At the same time, within the walls of Fio'taun, a similar individual presented himself to the guards. How he penetrated the defences of the city he would not say, all he asked was that he be allowed to speak to the castellan of the fortress. Again, his request could not be denied and he was permitted an audience with the ruler of the city. Within the hour, the fortress gates were opened, the stranger guiding the citadel's leaders towards the torchlit camp of their attackers.

As the enemies met, the newcomers, who called themselves Ethereals, bade all to sit. Beneath a maiden moon of purest white, they began to speak. The mysterious strangers explaining that the skills of each tribe were unique and should be harnessed, and they spoke of a Greater Good that could be achieved if only they would put aside their feuding ways and instead work together. The two strangers talked through the night, their words heavy with great power. As the sun crested the horizon, a truce was agreed between the warring factions.

Fio'taun was just the beginning. Soon, more Ethereals appeared and their message of the Greater Good spread to every corner of the planet. The new philosophy took hold quickly. With the internecine wars over, the Tau flourished as never before. Well-constructed towns and cities sprang up across the main continent, commerce routes were re-established and, everywhere, the winged Tau provided speedy communications.

More Ethereals went to visit the plains dwellers than visited all the other tribes combined. As the most aggressive of all Tau, these warriors had the hardest time accepting the new ways and required much convincing. Yet as they saw the larger and more impressive settlements being established by the other tribes, they could not help but admire the great progress, and finally submitted to the Ethereals' entreaties.

From that time forth, the Ethereals and a council of the eldest from each tribe decreed that the Tau would be formalised into castes, each known by the element that most befitted its role in the Greater Good. The builders and artisans would be the Earth caste, the scouts and messengers became the Air caste, the traders and civil administrators formed the Water caste and the warriors of the plains would be known as the Fire caste. Having saved the Tau from either extinction or, at the least, ignoble savagery, the Ethereals were revered with the utmost devotion. Although always the least numerous of all the castes, the Ethereals became the guiding force for all Tau, as it was they who saw the vision of what the future could hold for their race.

DYNAMIC EXPANSION

The Tau entered into an unprecedented period of rapid change heralded by new inventions and great leaps of advancement in many fields. Each caste became relentlessly driven in its pursuit of the next achievement for the Greater Good. The successes that followed were plentiful – with vast step changes discovered in metallurgy, engineering, energy production and weapons manufacturing. With breakthroughs occurring almost daily and hardship and disease greatly reduced, the planet of T'au was soon showing signs of overcrowding. Again, the Ethereals had the answers, and pointed towards the stars. At their bidding, the Earth caste began building and testing rockets; the Air caste began training for their new roles as pilots.

During this time of progress, only the Fire caste did not seem to advance. Although they used their new weapons and technology to hunt the larger predators of T'au to extinction, there was little call for a standing army. The Ethereals anticipated this growing frustration, focusing the Fire caste instead on the development of a new and tightly disciplined regimen. For guidance, they used the teachings of the Code of Fire, the ancient way of honour passed down the generations since the hunter tribes of the plains. With this 'way of the warrior' at its core, the Fire caste set up a birth-to-death training system, the start of the formalised traditions that are still carried on today.

The notion that the Tau's future lay in the stars was keenly grasped by all castes. After the first few rockets successfully escaped the planetary atmosphere, the Tau rapidly moved to establish orbital communities, followed by a base on Lu'val, the nearest moon. Scouting ships, probes and far-ranging scanning devices were sent deeper into space. The Tau ascertained that their world resided in a tightly packed star cluster with scores of planets in close proximity to each other. Scans reported that many of these worlds were capable of sustaining life. The construction of a massive orbital dock allowed larger space-faring craft to be built and soon colonising efforts were underway – the nearby planet of Tau'n became the first of these bold new enterprises.

A DESTINY TO RULE THE STARS

The Tau continued to push their realm outwards at an explosive rate, although losses were high amongst these early explorers. Not only did space travel and new and unusual environments take their toll, but as they ventured further from their homeworld, the Tau also began to encounter alien beasts, many of which proved dangerous.

At last came the time when the rigorous training of the Fire Warriors could prove its worth. The colossal reptilian beasts of D'yanoi consumed many colonists, before the quick deployments and disciplined volleys of the Fire caste drove the monstrous creatures back. On Sa'cea, the desert planet was so overrun with fierce, flesh-eating predators that the Fire caste had to hunt down and destroy them all before settlers would even dare to land.

During these early expansions the Tau also encountered alien races – whole civilisations of other sentient creatures. While the Fire caste sought to destroy any who opposed them, hunting them in the same manner in which they eradicated savage creatures, the Ethereals saw an opportunity to bring enlightenment instead of war. Just as the Ethereals had stopped the fighting on T'au and bound the tribes to work towards a common purpose, so too should the aliens be embraced and given a chance to contribute to the Greater Good. The Ethereals guided the other castes to accept these alien races, no matter how strange. It did not matter whether these new aliens were mired in barbarism, enslaved to crude superstitions or simply unaware of the magnitude of the great destiny unfolding before them, the Ethereals said all should be welcomed into the emergent Tau Empire.

Henceforth, whenever a new alien culture was encountered, the Ethereals employed a master strategy in which each Tau caste performed a designated role. Planets were first scanned by the Air caste and those classified as desirable were investigated further. If alien civilisations were discovered, the ambassadors of the Water caste, long trained in the subtle art of negotiations, were sent to make contact. Each integration offer was carefully contrived to entice the aliens – proposing trade deals, protection from enemies, or the advanced technological wonders built by the Earth caste.



Honourable greetings and invitations were extended to the multi-armed Thraxians, the invertebrate Greet, the Nicassar and many others. All were called upon to join the Tau Empire, to ally themselves through the appeal of mutual protection, trade and technology. The more primitive aliens quickly bowed before the fair-speaking Water caste emissaries, while others acquiesced only gradually. Ultimately, the results were the same, and within a short span of years, the Tau's cultural hegemony was dominant, with each race doing their part to aid the Greater Good. For instance, on their watery homeworld of Isla'su, the Greet allowed the Earth caste to build many floating factories atop the surface of their planet-spanning

oceans. This paid for the protection of their planet by orbital stations and allowed the Greet to better contribute to the Greater Good.

Not all alien races proved so accommodating. Those who refused cooperation outright were given harsh ultimatums. The full might of the Fire caste was unleashed upon any aliens that did not comply. Upon command, Tau Fire Warriors descended out of orbit onto a designated planet and delivered a series of rapid strikes to their foe before pulling back to avoid major retaliation. After such attacks, all but the most unrepentant were given another chance to reconsider. With key industries crippled and long-ranged communications jammed, many aliens found themselves fractionalised – unsure if others of their kind had already accepted the Tau's terms. Such divide and conquer tactics dragged most foes back to the negotiating table, although in some cases, wars of annihilation were inevitable.

Although the population was increasing exponentially, their expansions were on such a vast scale that the Fire caste warriors were already in short supply. They often found themselves outnumbered, although their astutely tactical Commanders quickly learned that even the largest enemy army could be brought to its knees by well-planned, rapidly executed strikes and judicious use of overwhelming firepower. Given the choice of bloody annihilation or assimilation and survival within the borders of the growing Tau Empire, all but the most stubborn of races bowed to the inevitable. One alien race, however, has proven a notable exception.



THE ORK THREAT

Orks are a prolific, green-skinned and brutal race that solves even the most trivial problems through violence. The Tau first discovered Orks on the planets surrounding their first major colony, Tau'n. Signals soon arrived reporting disparate Ork tribes scattered across every star system they investigated. The sophisticated Tau quickly learned to pinpoint the telltale Ork signature on their scanning equipment, and it appeared with alarming regularity on planets, moons, asteroid belts and virtually anywhere that could support life. It took many battles before the Tau at last abandoned their futile attempts to absorb Orks in the manner that had proven so successful with a dozen other alien civilisations: there was simply no bargaining with such creatures. The Ethereals themselves eventually conceded that these aliens were a lost cause and amended the protocols to forego any attempt to integrate the Orks, declaring, at last, that the Greater Good would be better off without them.

Now, when the troublesome aliens are discovered, the standard procedure is to approach the Orks in one of two ways: either by destroying them as quickly as possible in all-out war or by marking the territory with warning

beacons in order to establish a safe perimeter around the savage aliens. While these tactics are sound in theory, the Tau have learned from bitter experience that neither method is foolproof and that the greenskins are utterly unpredictable. The Orks actually enjoy prolonged wars and have proven nearly impossible to fully eradicate – reappearing on worlds long since deemed clear of their menace. Entire Ork invasion fleets also have a disturbing tendency to bypass all sensor readings and reappear unexpectedly to wreak havoc in some distant corner of the Tau Empire. Over time, constant vigilance and a rapid response seem to be the only effective countermeasures.

THE SPHERES OF EXPANSION

The rise of the Tau can be seen to develop through three distinct phases, periods of intense growth known to the Tau as ‘Spheres of Expansion’. Each of these waves of colonisation is marked by a long building up of resources, after which continual waves of exploratory missions are launched, followed, where needed, by military campaigns to solidify territorial gains. Once a colony transforms itself into a stable settlement, it then serves as a jumping-off point for the next expansion.

By the end of the millennia-long First Sphere Expansion, as it later came to be called, the Tau Empire had unfurled across the heavens and consisted of eight fully settled

systems known as septs. Named after its prime or ‘sept world’, a sept can include any number of additionally colonised planets or moons, as well as other holdings such as listening posts, sensor fields, shield satellites, orbital cities, and mining operations. Everything is connected, both by a series of space stations and a massive net of communications and sensor relays strung between major locations. Although it might take many generations to establish itself, each sept is unique, with its own cultural nuances and varying proportions of the different castes and alien populations.

Several factors combined to end the Tau’s first great period of rapid growth. Firstly, despite the terrific population explosion their race had been experiencing, their numbers were being stretched too thin, with need for more of every caste being felt. Fire caste warriors were in particularly high demand; the wars fought to conquer new planets had proven costly, and ongoing conflicts still raged in outlying areas. The second reason the First Sphere Expansion came to a halt was simply due to the distances between systems. After colonising the many dense clusters near T’au, the expanses between worlds became greater. At that time, it was already impossible to travel the span of the Empire in a single lifetime, and crossing the black gulfs that surrounded their star systems would take many, many generations. The Tau clearly needed to innovate new methods of space travel.

SEPTS OF THE FIRST SPHERE



T’AU

T’au is the birthplace of the Tau and it is here that the High Council, led by Aun’ Va, convenes, its decrees shaping the entire empire. T’au remains the centre of Tau culture and bureaucracy, and produces many Fire caste warriors. None can rival T’au for prestige, and only Vior’la can match its power.



TAU’N

The first new sept established, Tau’n, has a chain of enormous orbital docks and controls the largest of the Air caste space stations; every sept hosts ships of the Tau fleet (kor’vatura), but none can boast of more than Tau’n.



D’YANOI

Named after the twin moons of its sept world, D’yanoi has survived long isolation due to a space storm of fierce and unnatural qualities. It has also seen many infamous Ork invasions.



BORK’AN

The sept world of Bork’an is a centre of learning and academia, and its system has many rich mining planets. Bork’an has a high percentage of Earth caste, and Fire Warriors from here are not infrequently outfitted with prototype weapons and equipment.



DAL’YTH

Dal’yth Sept was ravaged during the Damocles Crusade; many of its outer colonies and several cities on its sept world were destroyed. It has recovered quickly, thanks to its busy trade ports. Large numbers of aliens can be seen here alongside its famously efficient Water caste merchants and diplomats.



FAL’S’HIA

Many technological innovations have come from this sept. Fire caste warriors from Fal’s’hia are often the first to try out prototype weapons, armour and system upgrades.



VIOR’LA

The planet Vior’la orbits a binary star and its name translates as ‘hot-blooded’. It is known to produce especially aggressive and skilled warriors. Many Ork invasions have been broken by the sept and the most respected Fire caste academies reside upon Vior’la.



SA’CEA

The world of Sa’cea is the hottest and most densely populated of all Tau worlds; producing more colonisation fleets during the Second Sphere Expansion than any other. Warriors of Sa’cea are regarded as particularly honourable.

MANTLE OF HEROES

The foremost sign of reputation and honour amongst the warriors of the Fire caste are their battlesuits – the apex of the Tau's military technology. Tau battlesuits are advanced suits of armour, which are piloted as much as worn. There are a variety of different models, each geared towards a different battlefield role. The lightweight Stealth battlesuit (XV25), or Stealth Suit, contains a powerful disruption field to camouflage it even in the open, while the more ponderous and heavy Broadside battlesuit (XV88) carries weapons equivalent to a tank. The mainstay of all battlesuits, however, is the versatile Crisis battlesuit (XV8), and its derivatives, which are capable of carrying a wide variety of weapons and support equipment, to optimise them for fighting in any situation or role.

Standard nomenclature has each model of battlesuit categorised by various numbers – the first denoting its size, or which mass class it belongs to, the second its evolution in the design process – the earlier the number, the more likely the model is still in prototype mode. For example, in the XV22 Stealth Battlesuit, the one made famous by Commander Shadowsun, the first '2' denotes it as a smaller grade suit, while the second digit means it is still undergoing field-testing. There are always new prototypes, upgrades and weapon fittings in the works for battlesuits, and the latest model to arrive on the front lines is the mighty XV104 Riptide.

In addition to their weapons, battlesuits carry the latest upgraded equipment, such as jet packs, recoil absorbers, or any number of additional support systems, including drone controllers, target locks, shield generators, or advanced sensors. Some rare marks of battlesuit carry wholly unique gear – such as the space-going XV8-06 Crisis Coldstar – each of which is fitted with integrated interface armour.

No matter its model, each battlesuit is a high tech marvel and maintains a balance between offensive capability, armoured protection, speed, agility and utility. It is little wonder then, that only the most experienced of Fire Warriors are promoted to Shas'ui, the honoured rank deemed worthy enough to pilot a battlesuit.

FORTUITOUS UNION WITH THE KROOT

At the close of the first period of expansion, an exploration fleet out of Dal'yth picked up long-ranged scans of Ork ships firing on Kroot Warspheres. The previously unencountered Kroot were defending their enclave on the planet of Krath, although they were hopelessly outnumbered. Intending only to observe, the Tau were drawn into the battle as both the Air caste Admiral and Fire caste Commander could not bear to watch the honourless Orks bludgeon their way to victory. Quickly deploying their superior fleet, the Tau destroyed the ramshackle greenskin ships. Too late, however, they realised that this was merely the vanguard of a mighty invasion force that was closing on them in an encircling pattern.

Thus began an extended war, both in space and over several planets, later named the War in the Place of Union, for it marked the first time the Tau and Kroot fought side by side. So effective was the sudden alliance that they withstood the Orks long enough for reinforcements from Sa'cea to arrive, and ultimately triumphed over the greenskins. The Tau were so impressed with the Kroot's fighting prowess, they agreed to extend the alliance in order to liberate the remainder of the Kroot enclaves, who were also under Ork attack. For the next ten years, the Tau helped drive all sign of Orks from the Kroot worlds, eventually coming to their homeworld of Pech at the behest of the greatest of Kroot leaders, the legendary Anghkor Prok. There, at the sacred Oathstone, the Kroot leader swore allegiance to the Tau Empire and pledged his warriors to fight for the Greater Good (and regular payment). That pledge, and the cooperation between the two races, is still honoured today. The Kroot are, by far, the most common alien auxiliary force to serve in Tau armies. The Tau greatly value the military service of the Kroot, although they continue to hope that exposure to their own superior culture will eventually cure the Kroot of their cannibalistic tendencies.

PROGRESS UNBOUND

Although their realm was larger than it had ever been, the planet T'au remained the spiritual heart of the Tau Empire. Of those born on distant septs, only those of lofty rank were ever able to travel to see their ancestral home, although all paid great deference to the eldest of Tau septs. There, the highest-ranking officials of each caste assembled at councils within the shining domes that dominate the skyline, receiving the wisdom of the most ancient of the Ethereal caste. From that High Council, the orders of expansion have ever been issued and passed along the relay stations to the ends of the Empire.



The Ethereals pushed the council relentlessly, driving all of the castes to further accomplishments. The Tau dedicated the next half century to rebuilding their thinly stretched armies, solidifying their infrastructure, and readying themselves for the next expansion. Auto-response probes were launched to explore the gulf of empty space past the Empire's borders, marking the Tau's first uses of a new technology: artificial intelligence.

The Water caste sought to supplement the shortage of the Tau population by redoubling their efforts to integrate their alien vassal worlds further into the Empire. This was accomplished in myriad ways; for example, the sturdy, if dim-witted, Anthrazods proved very well suited for the arduous toils of asteroid mining, while the tiny, dextrous-limbed crustacean race native to Brachyura were unmatched at the delicate assembly of the miniscule plasma generators needed

to fuel the latest Earth caste inventions. It was the alliance with the Kroot, however, that made the largest difference, as in a short period of time, the Fire caste armies were swollen by billions of additional warriors to aid the fight for the Greater Good, albeit in a more mercenary fashion than was considered ideal.

Only the Earth caste had failed to reach their prescribed goal. With engineering centres in every sept working diligently, the Earth caste provided innumerable innovations, but the invention demanded by the Ethereals – faster propulsion-technology to drive starcraft – eluded them. At last, the quantum leap came from Fal'shia Sept, where they finalised development of the ZFR Horizon Accelerator Engine. An ingenious design, this powerful new mechanism allowed ships to attain near-light speed. It was this device that would usher in the next phase of progress.



THE SECOND SPHERE EXPANSION

With a faster fleet and armies buoyed by an influx of Kroot Carnivore squads, the Tau Ethereal Supreme, Aun'Wei, declared the massive build up to be complete. With a single command that was heard throughout the Empire, the Tau launched the Second Sphere Expansion. Branching outwards from each of the hub centres of the First Sphere colonies, great fleets speared into the dark, spreading the Greater Good to worlds that from distant T'au were mere specks of flickering light.

The Second Sphere Expansion was to prove even more dynamic than the first, pushing further into space and establishing over a dozen new septs. During this time, a legend arose from the Fire caste, the greatest military thinker and strategist of his age, and perhaps of any other – Commander Puretide. He led his warriors to swift victories, and star systems fell before his campaigns of conquest. Many of the Second Sphere septs, such as Elsy'eir and Tash'var, owe their existence to Puretide's brilliant strategies, and it was his masterful counter-attacks that warded off the Ork invasions that threatened to overrun Au'taal Sept. It was said that even the Orks grew to fear facing an army led by Puretide, for while the greenskins loved to fight, the master tactician stole much of the joy from their battles with his evasive, yet hard-hitting tactics. Puretide's application of strategy and military theory were thoroughly recorded and are still taught at every Fire caste academy today.

The last breakthrough of the Second Sphere Expansion was the successful crossing of the Damocles Gulf, a mysterious region to the galactic east that had long thwarted all attempts by the Tau to pass through. Once on the other side of that roiling and unnavigable space phenomenon, the Tau swiftly established many colonies and outposts, soon making their first contact with the single largest power in the galaxy, the Imperium of Mankind. After a long and subtle campaign, the Tau Empire had peaceably encroached upon many planets within the area of space known to the humans as the Timbra sub-sector of Segmentum Ultima.

The bitter and destructive wars that were soon unleashed there were unlike anything the Tau had ever experienced, and that bloody fighting marked the beginning of the end of the Second Sphere Expansion.

SEPTS OF THE SECOND SPHERE



AU'TAAL

Au'taal Prime is a verdant and beautiful sept world, where only honoured heroes can retire.



N'DRAS

For reasons known only to the Ethereals, this once thriving sept has largely been abandoned.



KE'LSCHAN

Situated near the Perdur Rift, this sept has suffered many invasions and is less trusting of aliens than other Tau. The Ke'lschan fleet and Fire caste forces are only recently back to full strength after their clashes with Hive Fleet Gorgon.



ELSY'EIR

A densely populated sept with many moons, most of which are mined for the valuable ores used in the construction of battlesuits.



TASH'VAR

A frontier sept, those of Tash'var have been subjected to frequent Ork invasions and pirate raids. As a result, its people have become tenacious and hardy.



VASH'YA

Known as the world 'between spheres' the sept world was settled near the end of the Second Sphere Expansion, as it took a long period for the Earth caste machines to make the air breathable. Major Air caste fleets and many defence platforms are docked around the sept world.



T'OLKU

T'olku is known for its many large Ethereal temples, as well as the alien institutes, where many alien ambassadors are brought to be instructed in the ways of Tau culture and society before being assimilated back into their respective homeworlds.

CONTACT WITH THE IMPERIUM

Since first entering space, the Tau had experienced success after success. Guided by their Ethereals, each caste had overcome every obstacle yet encountered, and none could doubt Tau ascendancy. On the far side of the Damocles Gulf, however, the Tau faced an enemy unlike any other, and the epic clashes that followed heralded the beginning of an entire new age of battle.

The Tau Empire's first introduction to Humanity came not with the ruling Imperium, but with dissident elements that were operating on the fringe of that mighty dominion. The Imperium of Man is the largest realm in the galaxy, although much within its sprawling borders has never been explored or has been forgotten over its history. The region of space around the Damocles Gulf is just such an area, a wilderness where the Tau Empire had found room to take root.

The Tau first encountered free captains, pirates and lost human colonies that had regressed so that they had long forgotten their origins and any connection to their distant birth world. Those initial contacts ranged from friendly trade negotiations to instant hostility. It was some time before the Water caste came to grasp the fact that the humans they encountered were merely the lost remnants or willing outcasts of an incomprehensibly large galactic empire. Worlds claimed by dissident humans were soon annexed into the Tau Empire, but there was much debate about how to approach those planets still bound to the Imperium. In typical fashion, the high ranking caste leaders debated the situation before the Ethereals.

To some of the High Council, the Imperium seemed so powerful that overt aggression might lead to a war that they could not win. The leaders of the Fire caste called for war, but it was Aun'Va, an Ethereal second in authority only to Ethereal Supreme Aun'Wei, who determined the plan. The Water caste were to integrate themselves into human worlds loyal to the Imperium, insinuating themselves into the courts of Planetary Governors. Eventually, a score of worlds within the Imperium were trading with the Tau, even in preference to each other. Alien goods, and especially coveted Earth caste technology, flowed through these markets in blatant contravention of Imperial law. The time soon came to initiate the second phase of Aun'Va's instructions.

Upon those worlds that were deemed ripe, Water caste envoys whispered well-rehearsed words into willing ears. The seeds of rebellion had been long cultivated, and now bore fruit as, one by one, the Planetary Governors declared themselves and their worlds free of the shackles of the Imperium's brutal rule. It had taken decades to achieve, but the Tau spread more rapidly and with fewer losses than even the most brilliant military campaign could have achieved.



The Imperium's response to such sedition was slow in coming, but when it finally arrived, was characteristically brutal. The Tau were condemned as a dangerous xenos species and the Damocles Crusade was launched to expel them from the region. The Imperial forces were vast, based around a dozen capital ships, and included nineteen regiments of Imperial Guard and five provisional companies of Space Marines made up from a dozen Chapters. The initial battles were stunning victories for the Imperium, as the power of their fleet and the suddenness of their attacks smashed isolated outposts and eliminated outlying colonies. In a short period of intense conflicts, the Tau were pushed back across the Damocles Gulf, although in the later stages of this drive, the Imperium's victories were not so easily won.

The planets from which the Tau were driven were subjected to harsh recriminations – the Inquisition descended upon the remaining human populations and meted out cruel punishments to those who had rejected the Emperor's tenets. Meanwhile, the crusade followed the retreating Tau across the Damocles Gulf, entering the Tau Empire itself.

DAL'YTH DEFIANT

The first sign of the invasion came from the scanners of Pra'yen, the outermost planet of Dal'yth Sept. After picking up unusual readings, the Tau switched to long-ranged optics and were shocked to see great rents opening in space, with the massive Imperial battleships and their supporting fleet emerging out of nowhere. Although the Tau fleet and Pra'yen's well-armed orbital station took a toll upon the Imperial Navy, the way was soon cleared for the crusade to advance towards Dal'yth Prime.

In the largest conflict of the war, Imperial forces landed upon Dal'yth Prime. In this case, they were not taking on a recently converted Imperial world or newly founded colony, but instead were treading upon a heavily populated Tau sept world. The Imperial drop was contested by swarms of atmospheric fighters, but was eventually successful in establishing a beachhead. Soon, the Imperium's ground forces, with Titans and armoured formations as a spearhead, ploughed relentlessly towards the conurbation of Gel'bryn.

The Imperial advance was stalled by storms of missiles raining down from beyond the hills. When units were detached to drive back the Tau spotters, they were instead engaged by jump troops protected by cloaking fields. Each time Imperial forces attempted to regain momentum, they were met by the timely counter-attacks of the Fire caste. Night was the worst, as under the cover of darkness, Tau in advanced battlesuits made swift, hard-hitting strikes. With the Tau's superior optics technology, major losses were inflicted upon the Imperial armour, while suffering little damage in return. Mankind's elite Space Marines attempted to land behind Tau lines and regain the initiative, but they were defeated by teams of heavy battlesuits whose formidable firepower quickly downed their transports.

Despite their losses, the Imperial forces continued their advance and many sectors of Dal'yth were destroyed or evacuated in the fierce fighting. But with more Tau reinforcements arriving at the front and the Imperial Fleet's ability to hold orbit becoming tenuous, the Imperium's

momentum was spent; they were finally forced to withdraw, leaving much of their equipment behind. It is conceivable that the Tau could have encircled the crusaders, but at the Ethereals' insistence, the Water caste opened a dialogue and agreed a truce, allowing the invaders an unimpeded retreat.

PREPARING FOR THE STORM

After the great battle on Dal'yth, an uneasy peace descended upon both sides of the war-torn Damocles Gulf. Even as many in the Imperium readied themselves for another offensive, more pressing concerns called for a hasty redeployment of Mankind's gathered armies.

The Imperium had demonstrated but a fraction of its power, and that had proven enough to hurl the Tau Empire backwards. Yet the Tau had also learned from the engagements, the Fire caste gaining invaluable insight into Mankind's methods. They had fought a foe that was willing to absorb huge losses, like the Orks, but, unlike the greenskins, the Imperial forces used a wider range of tactics and employed a much more impressive arsenal.

In the aftermath, the Ethereals demanded a full study of captives and recovered equipment. The Earth caste declared much of the technology to be inferior, and some was simply too unstable to contemplate using, such as Imperial plasma devices. There were some eye-opening discoveries, however, and the Earth caste was in absolute wonder over a Warp engine they obtained. With no knowledge or understanding of the realm known as the Warp, they found the strange apparatus utterly unfathomable. To their further frustration, the captured humans that had operated it seemed to possess no actual understanding of its mechanisms either, running the equipment solely through the application of superstitious rituals and chanting.

THE IMPERIUM'S VIEW

Most within the Imperium saw the Tau as just another disgusting xenos form to be obliterated, but a few of the deeper thinkers were unpleasantly surprised by this new race. Although no match in close quarters, the aliens had proved tactically savvy – bold masters of ambush and counter-attack warfare. Their technology was clearly advanced and some weapons, such as the railgun, were rightly feared. Next to a hive world, the Tau cities seemed like paradises of efficiency. Many, particularly the Space Marine Captains, found the Tau to be honourable adversaries, worthy of respect.

Inquisitor Gallius was more alarmed by the Tau than any of his brethren. What struck him most about the Tau was that their naivety, technological prowess and unwavering belief in progress reminded him of what he had read of Mankind in its glory days, a time known as the Age of Technology. Although much of that period is unknown, some believe that Mankind's intellectual hubris and unworthy reliance on machines and artificial intelligences brought about the dreaded Age of Strife, a nightmare time of horror and violence. If the Tau were indeed upon that same path, then they represented a larger threat to the Imperium of Man and indeed, the whole galaxy, than any would easily believe.

THE ADVANCE CONTINUES

In the wake of their war with the Imperium, Aun'Va stood up in the High Council of Ethereals and voiced his concerns. He implored the Ethereal Supreme, Aun'Wei, then in the twilight of his days, for the rights to reclaim Tau losses. The Tau harbour an unquenchable confidence in their own destiny and are determined that their methods are the best. However, after their long retreat across the Damocles Gulf, and their firsthand experience with the formidable forces of the Imperium, many of the Tau were filled with self-doubt. This was not a race that had tasted defeat before, in any of their prolonged endeavours. Aun'Va argued that without action, cracks would form in the foundation of their carefully orchestrated beliefs — and this must not come to pass. Sensing the truth of this, the ancient Ethereal nodded, leaving the details for Aun'Va to organise.

Aun'Va knew that those worlds disenfranchised by the Imperium could be manipulated, and from communications intercepts, he knew that the sectors around the Damocles Gulf could expect no further reinforcements. Therefore, Aun'Va ordered the Fire caste to again cross that shifting barrier in space, the burgeoning Tau Empire stretching again into Mankind's realm, this time to reclaim their recently lost colonies.

ATTACK FROM BEYOND

During the period of consolidation in the wake of the Second Sphere Expansion, outposts alerted the Tau to an encroaching menace. It was Hive Fleet Gorgon that penetrated their realm, and although only a minor splinter compared with some of the larger incursions that had entered the galaxy, the Tau had never faced a threat like that of the Tyranids — an intergalactic alien race whose voracious invasions stripped and devoured planets of all living matter.

The Tyranids showed a remarkable ability to physically adapt — evolving between battles to better counter the defenders. Against their onslaught, the Tau were forced to constantly alter their battle plans as new strains of Tyranid creatures morphed to overcome each advantage of tactics, terrain or technology that the Fire caste employed. The Tyranids annihilated many holdings before grinding to a halt against the Tau's major defensive actions on the forested planet of Sha'draig. Although the planet was ultimately consumed, the aliens had been stalled long enough for the Tau to better prepare their defences at Ke'lshan Prime.

In a strange twist of fate, the sept world of Ke'lshan was first attacked by the forces of the Imperium — a fleet sent to aid in the Damocles Crusade over a hundred and fifty years earlier had only just emerged from the Warp. Faced with a common enemy, the Tau and Imperial leaders agreed an uneasy truce. The Tyranids could not adapt to the two forces acting in concert, and were eventually massacred, ending the threat of Hive Fleet Gorgon. The human armies, too depleted to continue their previously planned assault, were allowed to retreat, bearing honours given to them for their assistance. The Earth caste of Ke'lshan immediately began to rebuild their battered sept, the Ethereals telling them to prepare for the eventual return of one, if not both, of their previous invaders.

Although he had some reservations about his choice, Aun'Va selected Commander O'Shovah to head the military aspects of the reclamation effort. A protégé of the legendary Commander Puretide, O'Shovah was a dynamic and strong-willed leader who had risen to fame during recent campaigns against the Orks. The young Commander's tactical brilliance had already earned him the name of Commander 'Farsight' — for he was able to anticipate and exploit an enemy's course of action as if he already knew the foe's full battle plan.

Initially, Aun'Va's choice proved correct — every planet marked for reconquest was quickly taken. With much of their armed forces called away to war on other fronts, the Imperium's remaining defenders stood no chance against the devastating close-ranged strikes and bold thrusts that were Commander Farsight's signature tactics. The whole Tau Empire cheered with news of each of his victories.



A PARTING OF THE WAYS

With but a single world left to recolonise, Commander Farsight was drawn off mission by his age-old enemies, the Orks. What started as swift raids to repel the greenskins they found probing the edges of the newly recaptured space, soon turned into a prolonged war against a sizable conglomerate of Ork clans who travelled aboard crude asteroid bases. In time, O'Shovah's forces cut deeply into the Ork invasion, chasing the ruling Warboss to a nearby 'artefact world', a forlorn place long abandoned by the Imperium. Its name was Arthas Moloch, and there, Farsight's forces were engaged by a savage, yet unidentified enemy, while the Orks escaped in the confusion.

Little was reported from the battle, save that all the Ethereals that had been accompanying the expedition were slain during the combat and that their mysterious foe had disappeared, leaving Arthas Moloch desolate once more. Undaunted by his losses, and despite direct orders to return, Commander Farsight refused to rejoin the other forces of the Tau Empire. Instead, he led the remnants of his army back onto the Orks' trail. They were soon beyond communication range, passing further from home than any Tau had before.

The Tau Empire sent many messages via the chain of communications beacons, accelerator relays on the ends of the system broadcasting their messages deep into the unknown space that the Tau expedition had disappeared into, but no response came back.

It was possible that the vastness of space or some strange interference prevented the messages from reaching their recipient, but after many years with no reply, it was eventually deemed that the expedition was lost. The Tau Empire mourned the loss of one of their most illustrious Commanders. Years later, however, probes penetrated deep into the region where Commander Farsight had last been seen and beamed back ominous reports: O'Shovah yet lived, and had established his own colonies on the far side of the Damocles Gulf. This mysterious betrayal of the Greater Good still haunts the Tau Empire to this day.

A NEW AGE OF ASCENDANCY

Throughout the Tau Empire, recently built colony fleets were filling up orbital docks in anticipation of the call to launch a new Sphere of Expansion. Even as preparations were underway, warning signals flashed across the Tau Empire's relay lines. An age-old foe had returned in numbers beyond imagination; the Orks were back.

UNITE TO LIVE

They came from beyond the shroud of the Western Veil Nebula, the ragtag Ork armada emerging from the swirling gas clouds as suddenly as if they had materialised out of nowhere. As the first scans were picked up, the Earth caste technicians believed their sensors were malfunctioning, for the size of the greenskin fleet was staggering. The Ork invasion was composed of some dozen separate Waaaghs!, each with a Warboss vying for overall supremacy. Only the decrepit state of the Orks' spacecraft and their incessant in-fighting allowed the Tau Empire time to react.

Whilst many of the Tau panicked over the immensity of the looming threat, there was one who saw that, as always, if the Empire worked together, they could defeat even an invasion of this magnitude. Aun'Va – now Ethereal Supreme – remained as calm as still water. He gathered the leaders of every sept in order to form a comprehensive plan of action. Those septs closest to the Ork threat – Vior'la, Sa'cea, and Tau'n – would combine forces in a delaying attack. Behind them, all other septs would rush troops and starcraft towards the front to serve as the next wave of counter-attacks.

Across the Empire, the Air caste scrambled their fleets – converting trade ships and colony transports into troop carriers to accommodate the forces needed to stem the green tide. As the united Tau advanced to confront the oncoming Orks, initial engagements took place along the outermost regions of the Empire. The Tau navy launched hit-and-run attacks to lure pursuing Ork ships within range of orbital defence stations. The combined firepower of fleet and orbital bases caused heavy Ork losses, although several stations were destroyed when Ork sabotage ships crashed into the vast structures, allowing numerous greenskins to disembark and wreak havoc. Fire Warrior defenders were soon deployed aboard the remaining orbital stations and many desperate battles in the depths of space ensued, some lasting for many months.

As the individual clans of the greenskins separated to follow their own pursuits, the fighting spread across space and over more than a dozen surface locations. Wherever Orks made planetfall, additional Tau ground forces were landed to reinforce the area, even on barren moons, for the aliens had to be denied any chance to scavenge supplies or set permanent roots within the territory of the Tau Empire.

With the threat of being overrun forestalled, Aun'Va deemed the time was right for the next step of his master plan. Centuries before, when the Ethereal High Council knew that Commander Puretide was rapidly degenerating and would soon die, contingency plans were put into motion. The Earth caste had long been preserving Puretide's memories – seeking to build an AI holograph that would look, act and most importantly, think like him.

At the time, however, there was no assurance that this would successfully replace the indispensable instructor. So, as a safeguard, it was ordained that several of Puretide's top students would be placed in stasis – a time-proofing process that was then newly devised by the Earth caste. This meant that, in future times of war or expansion, the empire could still call upon masters of the art of war. Now, with the largest Ork invasion ever seen already within their borders, Aun'Va determined that a leader of great destiny was needed.



A NEW HERO OF THE PEOPLE

One of those cryogenically frozen was a recently promoted Commander by the name of O'Shaserra. Of her generation of Fire Warriors, there was only a single rival who could match O'Shaserra's boldness and tactical abilities. That other warrior, O'Shovah, was not frozen, but rather chosen for glory, leading the Tau's expeditionary force to reclaim their colonies after the war with the Imperium.

By the time O'Shaserra had completed her reindoctrination, the fighting had been going on for half a dozen years; the massive Ork invasion was now spread across the borders of many septs. With their superior weaponry and the cohesion of their forces, the numerically inferior armies of the Tau had been able to check the disorderly Ork hordes. It was a stalemate, as the disparate greenskins could not gain the momentum or unity to drive towards a sept world, and the Tau could not eradicate the aliens from their realm.

Taking leadership over a Hunter Cadre, Commander O'Shaserra joined the fray. After a daring string of victories, she earned control of a command – a formation of many cadres. By the time Sa'cea Prime's largest moon, Vay'harra, was proclaimed clear of Orks, Commander O'Shaserra's name was already becoming well known. From there, she led major victories on the dawn worlds of Kormusan, and finally on the K'resh Expansions. With each triumph, more Tau forces were freed to apply additional pressure to the fractionalised greenskin forces. After the total massacres of the K'resh Expansions, the power of the Orks was broken.

The Great War of Confederation, as it came to be known, lasted a dozen years and firmly established a new hero in the hearts and minds of the Tau. O'Shaserra, now called Commander Shadowsun, had proven herself to a new generation – her tactical manoeuvres at every level of command were executed flawlessly and she was not without personal heroics. Her penchant for infiltrating battlefields and launching deadly ambushes was already legendary. A bright new future for the Tau lay ahead.

THE THIRD SPHERE EXPANSION

With the Ork invasion defeated and a new hero risen to lead the Fire caste, Aun'Va knew the time was ripe to declare the Third Sphere Expansion. With more established septs to draw resources from, this drive to expand the size of their realm was undertaken on a scale never before attempted by the Tau Empire.

As bold and dynamic as the previous Spheres of Expansion had been, they had been confined to the dense star clusters that surrounded the planet T'au. The scope of such expansions was limited – the Tau did not have the population needed to spread further, and they had not yet fully learned to harness the full power of alien auxiliaries to aid their cause. Technical constraints proved a barrier as well, for the Earth caste have constantly been seeking ways to develop starcraft with faster engines to allow them to bridge the vast gulf of empty space between star systems.

Aun'Va knew that now was the time for the Tau to seize their destiny. The Great War of Confederation had served to put the Tau on a total war setting – as the Ethereals pressed each caste for greater production and higher efficiency. The Ork invasion had proven a harsh training ground for the Fire caste, but they had now replaced the casualties of the long, drawn-out campaign. Furthermore, many Fire Warriors and their Commanders had gained invaluable experience. They were now better trained than ever to coordinate their efforts with other septs and with the Tau navy. The amount of alien auxiliaries at hand for deployment to the Fire caste was greatly increased, especially the availability of the Kroot.

In order to reach those more distant systems earmarked as desirable by advanced scouts, the vast armadas of Tau starcraft had been outfitted with the latest Earth caste modifications. The ships' propulsion systems were upgraded so that when magnified by impulse reactors, the engines could obtain faster speeds – propelling starcraft forwards at hitherto unthinkable velocities. To further lessen the burden on those space-faring craft with the longest journeys, the Earth caste had outfitted transport craft with large stasis chambers – allowing Hunter Cadres or whole commands to shift to far distant battle zones months or years away without actually aging a day in the process.

BOW BEFORE THE GREATER GOOD

While all septs sent fleets to aid in the great expansion, the largest gathering of force was at the northern and western extremes of the Tau Empire. There, massed at the ports and orbital docks of Dal'yth, Sa'cea, and Vior'la, were huge flotillas. In addition to the fighting classes of starships, the Tau navy also provided whole armadas of transports to carry armies, colonists, pre-fab domes, drone builders and all manner of equipment. This massive force was to be led personally by Commander Shadowsun – the newly appointed highest-ranking Fire caste officer. Their course was to cross the Damocles Gulf, travelling past the Gri-lok asteroid fields. Target destinations had been meticulously planned out – all planets and moons desired for colonisation were well-marked on the fleet's holo-maps. Those worlds that had indigenous populations had already had many pre-emptive visits by Water caste traders and ambassadors in order to explore possibilities for a peaceful annexation.

Some of the planets branded for absorption into the Tau Empire were worlds that belonged to the Imperium of Mankind. In these cases, Aun'Va's timing of the Third Sphere Expansion could not have been better. Water caste agents and Gue'vesa – human helpers who had sworn loyalty to the Tau – confirmed what the Earth caste had already reported via intercepted transmissions: due to wars elsewhere, the number of Imperial defenders at the borders of their territory was much reduced.

Some Imperial planets, those open to bribery or idealists that wished to escape the pressing yoke of servitude to an overbearing tyrant, lay down their arms at their first opportunity – welcoming Water caste ambassadors with pledges of cooperation. Most human worlds, however, rejected Tau overtures – mistrusting all aliens or perhaps simply more frightened of the repercussions of their own race. For those frontier worlds that resisted, Shadowsun and her armies swept down in a series of precision strikes. The human defence forces proved insufficient to even slow the Tau down, much less hold them off.

The northernmost sector past the Damocles Gulf was soon wholly in Tau hands, while to the galactic west, the sectors adjoining the Red Sun systems were cleared of Hrud, Orks and rebel humans. Fleets of Water caste Indigenous Inhabitants Liaison conclaves were deployed to begin their long integration process for those aliens that wished to seize upon the enlightenment that was being offered. The Earth caste, eager to exploit their new domains, was already dropping producer domes upon recently seized planets rich with resources. In order to keep the drive going outwards, the Tau needed to establish fuel sources closer to the front lines of expansion. Linked back to the Tau Empire by long chains of relay comms, the expansion had already claimed dozens of new worlds – yet this was only the start.

SEPTS OF THE THIRD SPHERE

The Third Sphere Expansion has already established several new septs and more Expeditionary Cadres are launched and searching for new colonies now than have done so throughout the whole of Tau history.



KSI'M'YEN

The first of a handful of new septs, Ksi'm'yen is one of the many worlds previously claimed by the Imperium. Those human inhabitants who swore fealty to the Greater Good have been removed deeper into the Tau Empire to assure their safety and their proper assimilation into the Empire.



FI'RIDS

The Tau occupying the prime world of this sept wrested it from the grip of an Ork Warlord, and cleansing the star system has proven quite costly.

MU'GULATH BAY

Gateway to the Dovar system and site of a famous Tau victory, led by both Commander Shadowsun and Aun'Va, Mu'gulath Bay is well on its way to being established as a full-fledged sept.



SHADOWSUN TRIUMPHANT

Buoyed by her initial successes, Shadowsun rapidly led her armies deeper into Imperial territory. She seemed to be everywhere at once, driving her forces onwards. At the forefront of the offensive, the Fire caste spearheads were already en route to their next targets before the consolidation forces that followed hard on their heels had fully landed on the newly conquered planet. Here, Shadowsun was using the old Purity maxim: 'Follow up a victory by striking quickly, and you will win another.'

As Shadowsun passed into the Imperium's interior she encountered ever greater resistance, and she saw that to overextend her forces would deplete the momentum of the attack. Instead of crashing headlong into well-defended planets, she split her fleets, scattering them to a dozen headings. Each began a devastating series of hit-and-run attacks against which the Imperium could mount no effective counter. At length, the Imperium settled into a static defence of a handful of their most key worlds. Shadowsun exploited this strategy too, for it allowed her to again marshal her forces together and launch a massive attack on the planet of her choosing. Her first target was the hive world of Agrellan, a gateway planet whose orbit safeguarded a rich cluster of Imperial worlds.

Transports of fresh Fire caste warriors and many of the newest weapon prototypes were rushed to this battlefield for what would surely be a pivotal conflict. Aun'Va himself came to inspire the Fire caste, and upon seeing him, the Tau

knew their victory was assured. At last, the largest class of battlesuit was unleashed, and under Shadowsun's inspired leadership, its use proved a resounding success; everywhere one strode, victory followed. Fittingly, it was this new XV104 Riptide battlesuit that delivered the killing blow during the final engagement – laying waste to the massive heavy tanks that had so long blocked the gates to the world's capital hive. Although the Imperial defenders fought with their usual fatalistic grit, it was not long before the hive corridors ran with blood and only a few isolated pockets of resistance remained. The planet, renamed Mu'gulath Bay, belonged to the Tau and soon the whole system would follow.

The anticipated counter-attack from the Imperium fell upon the Zeist sector, and this too was part of Shadowsun's plan. As a diversion, this far-flung system was sacrificed for the Greater Good of the Third Sphere Expansion. While many seeded colonies fell to the elite forces of Mankind – their vaunted Space Marines – the effort tied down the majority of the Imperium's rapid strike forces and allowed the main Tau assaults to scythe deeply into more desirable neighbouring star systems. The worlds of the Imperium toppled one after another before the precision onslaught.

**'LET NONE DOUBT THAT THE TAU EMPIRE WILL
BRING UNITY TO ALL – LET NONE DOUBT THAT NOW
IS OUR TIME. FORWARD, FOR THE GREATER GOOD!'**

– AUN'VA, ADDRESSING THE FIRE CASTE CADRES
FROM ATOP THE RUINS OF THE AGRELLAN HIVE

A GROWING EMPIRE

Since the Tau first left the atmosphere of their birth world, their empire has grown, spreading across the stars in three distinct Spheres of Expansion. In addition to the settled systems, or *septs*, the Tau realm is rife with all manner of space phenomenon, Tau-made structures and important alien homeworlds.

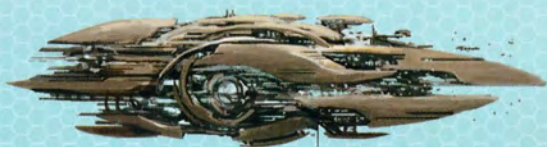
TAU SEPTS

Septs are the most important feature of the Tau Empire. Each is named after their Prime or sept world and can include any number of additionally colonised planets, moons or artificial bases under one central control. The older septs, those of the First Sphere Expansion, are the most densely populated.

The sept from which a Tau hails forms a large part of his identity, as the culture of each sept is subtly unique. All castes are found in each sept, although the relative proportions of the various castes can vary greatly.

FORTRESS STATIONS (TA'SHIRO)

Positioned in the deep space between septs are *ta'shiro* bases – fortress stations capable of enough thrust to resist drift and maintain permanent interstellar positions. Several patterns of development have been followed in the construction of these enormous floating fortresses – with the largest comparable in population to a continent-sized city.



KROOT WORLDS

The Kroot are the most common of the alien auxiliaries in the Tau Empire and dozens of Kroot enclaves can be found among the septs. Although they are a far-flung and migratory race, all Kroot eventually feel the pangs that lead them to return to their birth world – the true home of all Kroot Kindreds, the world of Pech.

SHA'GALUDD

Homeworld of the Nagi, a small species of highly intelligent worms known for their mind control abilities. When first discovered, the Nagi were hated creatures known as mind-worms, but since the early violent conflicts, they have agreed a peace accord and joined the Tau Empire. Many Nagi now serve as advisors to the Ethereal caste.

VESPID

Benighted gas giant and homeworld of the Vespids race, this planet is also known for its rich crystal mines.

SUNBURSTS

In attempts to drain stars of energy, many suns have been accidentally sent into supernova. Thus far, the Earth caste has failed to collect this resource, and travel into these regions is unadvised. Since failing at fuel-collection, the Earth caste are experimenting with a sun-killer weapon to devastate enemy systems, but thus far all solutions have proven too unwieldy.

THE ZONE OF SILENCE

Devastated region where Hive Fleet Gorgon left behind many barren planets, scoured of all life forms.

RELAY COMMUNICATIONS BEACONS (TAL'HYEN)

Tau communications can only travel so far before their signals fade, so relay stations are positioned to form chains capable of crossing the gulf of space. It is an effective means of passing information, but each holo-vid can take months to cross interstellar distances and the quality can vary based on the number of relays and the amount of interference, such as dust clouds and solar winds.

ISLA'SU

The watery homeworld of the Greet, often considered part of the Fal'shia Sept.

FARSIGHT ENCLAVES

Although not a part of the Tau Empire, the breakaway faction led by Commander Farsight are known to have settled throughout this region. The exact names of the martial-led septs are unknown, as the armed fortress stations have proven effective at destroying probes.

RED SUN SYSTEMS

Probes have marked the dense cluster of planets around a string of six distinct red suns; however, the massive Ork population has deterred any further Tau colonisation. The systems are ringed with sensor buoys, in hopes of offering early warnings should the greenskins ever cease their internal fighting and seek to menace neighbouring systems.

ORBITAL CITIES OF THE KOR'VATTRA

Incorporated into every sept are dozens of major docks for the Tau navy (*kor'vattra*), but in addition to these immense stations, many septs have also developed vast orbital cities (*kor'shuto*). These can be moved to provide stable 'jumping off' points for large research endeavours, military campaigns or major colonisation efforts.



THE TAU EMPIRE



DAL'YTH SEPT

Ta'Shiro Trade Station
Akul
Victory Site
Pra'yen
Dal'yth
Dal'yr
Gas Cloud Mining Fleet

FR'RIOS

KSI'MYEN

MU'GULATH BAY

DAL'YTH

Farsight Enclaves

Gri-lok Astroid Field

Arthas Moloch

VIOR'LA

SA'CEA

Sha'galudd

WESTERN VEIL NEBULA
Gas Clouds

TAU'N

T'AU

KE'LSHAN

AU'TAAL

THE ZONE OF SILENCE

N'DRAS
Q-15

VASH'YA

Ironrok
Red Sun Systems

Gurgit's Mekworld

T'OLKU

ELSY'EIR

Landfall

TASH'VAR

D'YANOI

Vesp'd

ULTIMA SEGMENTUM

THE TAU EMPIRE

ULTRAMAR

KEY

Communications Routes

Relay Beacons

1st Phase Septs

2nd Phase Septs

3rd Phase Septs

Kroot World

Other Worlds

Farsight Enclaves

Fortress Stations

Orbital Cities

Sunburst

Mining Fleet

ART OF WAR

Although their technology has evolved, the Tau are proud to preserve many ancient customs. Much of the military tradition of the Fire caste can be traced back to the early hunter tribes that stalked the plains of T'au, including unit organisation, tactics and the warrior's Code of Fire. It is with great honour that the Fire caste continues such ancient traditions today.

The Fire caste are professional soldiers. In some ways, their training regimen begins moments after their birth, for the great communes are fully given over to raising the best soldiers and nothing else. Discipline, fitness, hard work and following orders are drilled into the growing warriors. It is customary for teams to be raised and trained together, allowing the troops to form strong connections – a comradeship-in-arms that will serve them well no matter where in the Tau Empire they are sent off to fight.

To be named a shas'la – a full-fledged warrior of the Fire caste – is to have completed the rigorous training and to have passed the final rite of passage signifying that one has proven successful at this crucial stage; those not healthy or bright enough to pass these tests are never heard from again. The Fire caste never stops readying for war – their academies are purpose built to refine training and to educate their warriors in the ways of war. To the Fire caste, war is an art form – a discipline to be studied and applied.

COMMANDER PURETIDE

Commander Puretide embodied the Code of Fire and complete dedication to the Greater Good. Grievously wounded towards the end of his life, Puretide became a hermit, spending his last years committing his accumulated wisdom and experience to posterity. He wished to pass on his unique, balanced style of war so that, after his death, others could build upon his successes. All Fire caste academies teach Puretide's work and, to this day, the most promising students, perhaps only one every generation, can still apprentice directly under the tutelage of Puretide himself. These elite disciples spend time with the old master thanks to the Earth caste's holographic programming technology. However, this is no mere recording of old images, but an interactive AI-assisted projection that thinks, responds and contemplates. The Ethereals tightly control access, but those few who meet the requirements join Puretide at his retreat atop the peak of Mount Kan'ji, on Dal'yth Prime, where the brilliant commander instructs, questions and teaches. Despite all his efforts – both when he lived and in his current form – few, if any, of Puretide's students have grasped the full scope of his balanced enlightenment. Even now, there are rival philosophies of the execution of warfare, with opposing sides each championing a single aspect of his teachings to the exclusion of the others.

'WHEN TO STAY BACK AND COMMAND AND WHEN TO LEAD FROM THE FRONT, AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS, THESE ARE THINGS A LEADER CANNOT BE TAUGHT, BUT EACH MUST FIND IN HIS OWN WAY. IN THE END, THE FINAL ARBITER IS VICTORY. YET I STRESS, TO TRIUMPH WITH THE LEAST AMOUNT OF RISK MUST ALWAYS BE THE GOAL.'

— COMMANDER PURETIDE

TACTICAL PHILOSOPHIES

By far the two most common forms of Hunter Cadre tactics used by the Tau are the *Mont'ka* and *Kauyon*. Each method is taught in depth by the great Fire caste academies and each has its own adherents amongst the masters. Both styles are based on ancient hunting techniques, each representing one of the two broad approaches to slaying your quarry: one involves luring the prey to the hunter (*Kauyon*), the other involves the hunter running the prey to ground (*Mont'ka*). Although some Commanders or septs favour the use of certain teams or weaponry for certain styles, ultimately it is the tactics being used that make the difference. This is a concept the masters of the academy, all preeminent warriors in their day, stress to their pupils.

MONT'KA

Roughly translated, *Mont'ka* is 'the killing blow'. The most aggressive style of Tau warfare, its tenet is all about the art of identifying a target of opportunity and attacking it swiftly with a Hunter Cadre. There are many famous variants of the *Mont'ka*, with most revolving around rapid strikes with a mobile force and taking the fight directly to the foe. The theory behind it is that landing a swift and decisive blow to the vitals of the enemy will eventually win the fight. Common to all methods of Tau warfare, *Mont'ka* places a strong emphasis on target prioritisation and concentration of fire – attacking the right foe at the right time with an overwhelming application of force. Attacking too soon will cause the assault to lose impetus, while attacking too late will hand the foe the initiative.

A cadre pursuing the *Mont'ka* may stand in readiness for several days awaiting the command to strike. During this time they will review the plan – choreographing the moves they will perform when the call to strike comes, charting out all nuances of targets, terrain and timing. Often, the attack will be delivered in varied stages, with elements of the assault arriving in different manners and quite often from separate directions. The coordination of such events is pre-planned, although, naturally, there are a range of contingencies and adjustments that can modify the plan in response to the variables of the battle.

The final decision to launch a *Mont'ka* comes from one who has a good view of the foe – often a Pathfinder Team that has worked its way forwards into enemy territory. There is a great bond of trust between the cadre that conducts the *Mont'ka* and the Commander who orders it, and a well-honed attack will bring great honour to both. The attack will be called off immediately if the prey remains resilient or proves especially troublesome or evasive. Escalation or grinding battles are not the way of the *Mont'ka*, and rather than enter into a fight of attrition, the Tau find it far preferable to pull back out of range and begin planning for another strike.

KAUYON

The Kauyon art of war is the oldest of the Tau techniques, and the words for hunter and patience are both derived from this same root. This style of combat relies on the interaction of the hunter and the lure. The lure can be almost anything – most likely a friendly unit deployed in an intervening position upon the battlefield or perhaps an objective known to be vital to the foe. Using wisdom and foresight, the patient hunter will anticipate the enemy's path and deploy in the most advantageous manner to attack them. For example, a cadre practicing Kauyon might set up an attack along a known enemy advancement – placing a team far forward to inflict some initial damage before falling back. As the friendly troops withdraw, they are sure to be followed by the vengeful foe. How best to attack that advancement is where the art of Kauyon comes into play.

True masters of the ambush attack have so many layers of plans within plans that only at the end do their opponents come close to realising that all of their actions have been anticipated, even orchestrated, to achieve the attacker's end result. Many a foe has been drawn in by the spider-web plans of a Kauyon, lured by intentional weak spots left on the Tau battle line, or induced into a killing zone by teams feigning retreat. There are many subtleties to the Tau ambush strategy, with canny Commanders using multiple distractions to split a foe's forces, or actively moving their lures in order to spread the enemy out, leaving them vulnerable to impending attacks.

MOBILE WARFARE

The Fire caste is entirely committed to mobile and rapid-strike warfare. Movement is key, whether launching the aggressive attacks of Mont'ka, racing to get into the key positions demanded by Kauyon, or attempting any of the lesser known hunting styles such as the encirclements of Rinyon or the thousand daggers approach of Rip'yka. On these grounds, the Fire caste is built and equipped for fluid battle tactics. The Tau regard close combat as primitive and always plan their attacks around the application of ranged firepower. After a plan has run its course, whether in victory or defeat, Hunter Cadres are extricated from the battlefield using one of many planned exit strategies.

As a general principle, Tau forces do not hold positions by choice. While they recognise the tactical advantage of terrain, and always attempt to use it to their benefit, they do not see the wisdom of fighting over ground and regard territorial gain as irrelevant compared to the destruction of enemy forces; skilled Commanders look for the best opportunities to destroy the foe. The ground is only valuable as a position from which to make the kill; once the enemy is gone, the territory is for the taking. With planning, advanced scanners and scouts, the Tau identify, track and kill targets in an efficient manner, preferring to keep as much distance between themselves and their prey as possible.

A Tau army will gladly retreat from a strong enemy attack to preserve Tau lives while waiting for an opportunity or opening to strike back decisively. Unlike many races, Tau attribute no dishonour to prudent retreat and perceive



last stands as incompetent defeats or the last refuge of an unimaginative Commander. When seeking to wear out or reduce a numerically superior foe, the Tau prefer a disconnected series of rapid strikes and ambushes, each planned to deliver maximum damage for the least cost in lives and resources.

While sacrifice for the Greater Good is considered heroic, unnecessary losses are disdained. Even after leading a cadre to a remarkable victory, a Commander whose army has sustained a large amount of casualties that might have been prevented does not rejoice, but is instead greatly shamed. Duty requires that he ask to step down and rejoin the ranks to atone for his failure. If the breach of conduct is more severe, the Ethereals themselves might step in and demand the Malk'la ritual, an event that scars all who witness it.

THE CHANGING FACE OF BATTLE

As the Tau Empire expands, the need to fight larger scale engagements has grown and caused the purist Fire caste approach to be questioned. At the suggestion of the Ethereals, large numbers of auxiliaries (largely made up from allies auxiliaries) have been incorporated into the military to swell the ranks. Meanwhile, the new armaments and advanced equipment invented and produced by the Earth caste continues to provide new technological options. Yet the aged masters of the Fire caste academies continue to stress the old maxim: 'Our technology advances with the years; our tactics do not'.

FIRE CASTE ORGANISATION

Fire caste armed forces are deployed to protect Tau holdings or to destroy those that oppose the Tau Empire's enlightenment. In order to achieve success with their rapid strikes and ambushing firefights, Tau forces must be flexible, and ready to work together. It is a Fire caste mantra that each every unit must operate in conjunction to fulfil the dictates of the Greater Good.

TEAMS (LA'RUA)

The smallest standard unit in the Tau military is known as a team. The most commonly deployed is the Fire Warrior Team, the backbone of most Tau armies. Each team of Fire Warriors consists of between six and twelve soldiers. All members of a team come from the same sept, and most likely have gone through Fire caste academy together. All teams have a team leader, although he can only earn the higher rank of shas'ui after extensive battlefield experience.

Teams that serve together in the field often bond themselves through rituals, of which the most famous is the 'ta'lissera', which roughly translates to a type of communion or binding oath. Those who have sworn such an oath may address each other by their individual names and have vowed to support one another unto death. It is not uncommon for teams to progress together as well – veteran Fire Warrior Teams may even earn promotion to shas'ui together. Each might serve for a time as a squad leader for a different Fire Warrior Team before the survivors are reunited as a Crisis Team.

CADRES (KAU'UI)

A cadre is a collection of teams joined under a single Commander. There are many types of cadre, but by far the most common one is the versatile Hunter Cadre. It is a combined arms group, fielding infantry, battlesuits and gunships together. A cadre is comparable in size and power, if not in composition, to what the Imperial Guard might call a company. Hunter Cadres are a standing formation, although their exact structure is variable, subject to change due to the tactical situation on the ground, the quarry they are hunting, the available reinforcements or a Commander's favoured mode of attack.

The core of most Hunter Cadres is its Fire Warriors, but these can be supported in a number of ways. Pathfinders scout ahead and mark prospective targets, elite battlesuits provide hard-hitting strike teams, Sniper Drone Teams pick off the foe's greatest threats and Hammerhead Gunships use their deadly armaments to blast enemy armour or break up massed infantry attacks. The doctrine of Tau battle tactics is all about the efficient coordination of different groups – from the infantry to the battlesuits, the gunships to the aircraft, all must work as one to defeat the foe. A Hunter Cadre is fully integrated at the tactical level, so that all teams are considered to be part of the same fighting unit.

There are a number of different cadres in addition to the hunter variety, although they tend to be smaller in size and more optimised for individual roles. There are Rapid Insertion Forces made exclusively of fast-striking battlesuit teams, Infiltration Cadres of Pathfinders and Stealth Teams and Auxiliary Reserve Cadres, battle groups made entirely of alien warriors. A particularly formidable group

is the Armoured Interdiction Cadre, a force composed of Hammerhead and Sky Ray Gunships. Its heavy firepower is used to counter enemy tanks and is capable of toppling even the mightiest targets. During the Hive Fleet Gorgon invasion, Armoured Interdiction Cadres blunted the Tyranid bio-titan spearhead – pitting shoals of Hammerheads against towering Hierophants flanked by the tank-sized Hierodules.

CONTINGENTS (TIO'VE)

A contingent is a grouping of cadres, normally three to six in number. The most senior Commander is designated as Contingent Commander, and his own cadre is nominated as a headquarters guard. An Ethereal might be present in a force at cadre level, but there is always at least one when a contingent is formed. Ethereals often stay at the headquarters position, as it is a hub for incoming reports and his councils can be best received there. Should an Ethereal wish a closer observation of a situation, he will attach to or even assume leadership over a cadre.

Unlike a cadre, a contingent is not a permanent formation, though efforts are made to preserve contingents that have served efficiently together during prolonged campaigns. Once objectives are achieved – such as a breakthrough of enemy lines or the elimination of a foe – the contingent is dissolved or reformed into another arrangement.

COMMUNE (KAVAAL)

Sometimes translated as 'battle', a commune is a temporary grouping of contingents and the highest level of Fire caste organisation thus far committed in the field. Communes are often formed by contingents from different septs, and although rarely seen before the Damocles Gulf conflicts, they are now more regularly formed, most famously during the decade-long campaign against the Orks known as the Great War of Confederation. Only the combined forces of many septs could have hoped to stop the gargantuan Ork Waaagh! that threatened the Empire.

COMMANDS (UASH'O) AND COALITIONS (SHAN'AL)

A command is the term used for all the forces of a single caste in a given location. For instance, all the Fire caste on the world of Nimbosa were part of Fire Caste Command Nimbosa, while all Air caste formations were part of the Air Caste Command Nimbosa.

The four commands are drawn together into a strategic organisation referred to as a coalition, and are presided over by a specially assigned Ethereal council. Thus, a coalition will consist of all Tau and auxiliary forces on a given world or within a particular system.

THE MU'GULATH BAY EXPEDITIONARY FORCE

The Mu'gulath Bay Expeditionary Force was assembled outside Fi'rios Sept and launched to suppress and colonise the Imperial hive world of Agrellan (named Mu'gulath Bay by the Tau).

COALITION COMMAND

Such is the import of this mission that it is led by none other than Ethereal Supreme Aun'Va.

TRANSPORT TASKFORCE

The Taskforce's mission is threefold: deliver the Expeditionary Force to its destination, carry Commune groupings to target landings and provide aerial support of ground forces.

INTERSTELLAR CRAFT

5 x Custodian class carriers
12 x Protector class warships
2 x Emissary class envoy ships
8 x Kroot Warspheres
24 x Transports
2 x Nicassar Dhows

ORBITAL WING

22 x Manta Heavy Dropships
15 x Orca orbital transports

AIR PROTECTION SQUADRONS

3 x Barracudas
1 x Tiger Sharks
6 x Razorshark Strike Fighters
3 x Sun Shark Bombers



COMMUNE

Commander Shadowsun leads all Fire caste forces and has organised her contingents for a choreographed attack plan to strike marked targets and fulfil specific missions.

INSERTION CONTINGENTS

Pathfinder Recon
Stealth Team Dropstrike
Firststrike Assault

ENCOUNTER CONTINGENTS

Hunter
Armoured Interdiction
Forward Stealth

BREAKTHROUGH CONTINGENTS

Crisis Dropstrike
Piranha Firestream
Riptide Rapidstrike

RESERVE ENCOUNTER CONTINGENTS

Hunter Retaliation
Auxiliary Exploitation

DENSE ENVIRONMENT CONTINGENTS

Stealth Removal
Auxiliary Dispatch

SHADOWSUN'S FIRSTSTRIKE ASSAULT HUNTER CADRE

This mobile assault configuration was led by Shadowsun during the initial attack on the Solarus Gate hive node that opened the Mu'gulath Bay campaign.

Shadowsun and Command Team
[Shadowsun & Crisis Bodyguard Team]

Fire Warrior Teams with Devilfish x6

Fire Warrior Teams x6

Pathfinders Teams with Devilfish x2

XV25 Stealth Teams x2

XV104 Riptide x2

XV8 Crisis Team x2

Hammerhead Gunship x3

Sky Ray Gunship x3

Razorshark Strike Fighter x4



CADRES

A wide range of troop configurations were used in the ground attack on Mu'gulath Bay, including the following cadres:

Hunter	Auxiliary Reserve
Mobilised Hunter	Armoured Interdiction
Firebase Support	Ranged Support
Advanced Insertion	Retaliation
Rapid Insertion	Skysweep Defence Shield
Optimised Stealth	Counterstrike
Crisis Dropstrike	Kroot Hunting Pack

SUPPORT WORKGROUP

The second wave Earth caste support teams included:

Combat Maintenance	Resource Reclamation
Engineering Support	Pacification Support
Debris Removal	Colony Constructor

DIPLOMATIC CORPS

The third wave of airdropped support are the Water caste colonizing agents, including the following teams:

Indigenous Translation	Population Rehabilitation
Diplomatic Arrangement	Worker Transference

LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

The language of the Tau is a complex, highly evolved form of communication. In sound, it is deeply lyrical and soft, with many words and meanings varying greatly depending on a user's intonation, glottal emphasis and even posture. Its multiple arrangements of polysyllabic word groups make it difficult in the extreme for human speech organs to pronounce correctly. Without voice translation technology, only the most skilful linguist would have any hope of speaking even the most basic Tau words and phrases.

Tau names are multipart, with the prefix that names the caste they were born into considered by far to be the most important part. The castes are as follows: Fire (Shas), Earth (Fio), Air (Kor), and Water (Por). The name of the fifth caste translates most often as Ethereal (Aun).

With the caste established, the second portion of a Tau name refers to their rank within society. The Tau are unusual as a culture in that there is no stigma attached to rank or profession. Each individual has his or her place in society and commands equal respect no matter how menial a task they perform. Each role is recognised as being part of the greater whole and a furtherance of the common good. When non-Tau, such as alien races just beginning to enter contact with the Tau Empire, point out that some classes,

such as Fire caste Commanders or any of the Ethereal caste, are clearly given respect bordering on reverence, the Water caste envoys simply speak one of over two dozen subtle variations in the Tau language that translates roughly as the phrase 'first amongst equals'.

There are five major levels of rank within society, each of which has a subtly different meaning dependent on the caste to which it is suffixed. In ascending order of seniority, these ranks are as follows, including the best translation of each rank based upon the Fire caste.

'La – warrior

'Ui – veteran

'Vre – hero

'El – noble (or possibly knight)

'O – commander

Next in a Tau's name comes his sept, which can translate as either his extended family or place of birth. This portion of the name has wide interpretations that are not easily picked up by aliens. For example, a Tau from one of oldest septs may be perceived as wiser or more sophisticated than one from a more recently established sept. Certain septs also contain meaning in themselves, as they embody a particular trait. For example, the name of Vior'la means 'hot blooded' and those who hail from that sept are considered particularly aggressive, while those from Bork'an Sept are regarded as quick learning and contemplative.

Lastly comes a Tau's individual name, which is earned in recognition of some achievement, rather than given at birth. These are sometimes the most puzzling elements of the name and while some may be relatively easy to understand, such as 'Shovah' (far-sighted) or 'Kais' (skilful), others are more obscure. It is possible for remarkable individuals to accumulate more than one name over the course of their lifetimes, and some of the most notable Tau have literally dozens of names. It is common to truncate one's full list of names and be known by a simplified appellation.

As an example of how a full Tau title translates, the name Shas'O Vior'la Shovah Kais Mont'yr can be broken down as follows: The individual is a member of the Fire caste (Shas), holds the rank of Commander ('O), hails from the world of Vior'la and has the personal names that translate as farsighted (Shovah), skilful (Kais) and blooded (Mont'yr). However, this Tau is more commonly known as O'Shovah or Commander Farsight.

TAU WORD BEST TRANSLATION

<i>Aun</i>	Ethereal/celestial
<i>Be'gel</i>	Orks
<i>Da'noh</i>	Mystery not yet unravelled by the Earth caste
<i>Fu'llasso</i>	Political mess, to be unscrambled by the Water caste (literally 'cursed mind knot')
<i>Gue'la</i>	Humans
<i>Gue'ron'sha</i>	Space Marines (literally 'engineered human warriors')
<i>Gue'vesa</i>	Humans who have joined the Tau Empire (literally 'human helpers')
<i>Kor'vesa</i>	Drone ('faithful helper')
<i>Ko'vash</i>	To strive for (literally 'a worthy cause')
<i>Lhas'rhen'na</i>	Euphemism for worthy or noble sacrifice (literally 'shattered jade')
<i>Mal'caor</i>	Spider
<i>Mal'kor</i>	Vespid
<i>Mont'au</i>	The Terror, the Tau's worst nightmare
<i>Mont'yr</i>	Blooded
<i>M'yen</i>	Unforeseen
<i>Or'es</i>	Powerful
<i>Por'sral</i>	Propaganda campaign
<i>Run'al</i>	Small blind or bunker
<i>Shas'ar'tol</i>	Fire caste High Command
<i>Shas'len'ra</i>	Cautious warrior
<i>Shi</i>	Victory
<i>Ta'lissera</i>	Communion/Marriage/Bonded
<i>Tau'va</i>	The Greater Good
<i>Ves'ron</i>	Robotic being
<i>Vral</i>	Undercut, work to undermine
<i>Y'eldi</i>	Air caste name for a particularly gifted pilot (literally 'winged one')
<i>Y'he</i>	Tyrantid ('ever-devouring')

FIVE CASTES, ONE PEOPLE

Although they are one race, the Tau castes are so evolutionary distinct at this stage in their development that the differences run more deeply than mere appearances. Each caste acts, speaks and even thinks in its own unique manner. With a glance it is easy to identify a Tau's caste; however, it takes closer scrutiny to reveal his rank in Tau society and possibly which sept he originates from.

A Tau's caste is the easiest to distinguish, as the physical traits of each are immediately recognisable: the larger framed and more muscular Fire caste, the tall, willowy Air caste, the stout and prosaic Earth caste, the facially expressive Water caste, and the gaunt yet graceful Ethereals. Most Tau appear stern and impassive, their flat faces registering little to no emotion, with the exceptions of the Fire caste, who can be roused to an intense anger, and the highly demonstrative Water caste, whose facial features are softer and more expressive than any other of Tau kind.

The colour of a Tau's skin offers hints as to his caste as well which sept he calls home. In general it can be said that the Fire caste tend to have the darker pigmentation, while the Air caste have the palest. The darker the Tau's bluish-grey skin, the closer to the sun he lives – therefore those hailing from Vior'la have much darker skin than those from B'orkan. Some strange quality in the green-tinged sun of the N'dras sept can leave those from that region slightly mottled.

Although all Tau speak the same language, each caste has adopted a unique pattern of speech and each sept has a distinctive dialect. Ever pragmatic, the Earth caste speak in matter-of-fact tones, similar to, but more monotonous than the clipped orders of the Fire caste. Both, however, are audibly different from the shrill tones of the Air caste or the calm, yet unnaturally penetrating speech of the Ethereals. As the Water caste usually adopts the speech patterns, mannerisms and tones of those with whom they converse, it is more difficult to gauge what their dialect actually sounds like; however, when on their own or only amongst others of their caste, their speech patterns and voices are the most melodic of all Tau. Those Tau from the elder septs (those



from the First Sphere Expansion) are generally considered more sophisticated and erudite than those from the newer, outlying worlds, and not surprisingly, the Tau accent is regarded as the most prestigious.

As a culture, the Tau have put aside individual gain in favour of the Greater Good. Thus, such things as personal possessions or sole ownership are rare, with communal ownership of everything being the norm. Each Tau is taught to be loyal to Ethereals, the empire, his sept and his caste, in that order. As they are raised by caste institutions, family allegiance is an alien concept, with perhaps the closest thing in Tau society being those who are bonded in a *ta'lissera* – a pact where groups of Tau pledge support to each another. This is the highest form of Tau affection for one another, as it symbolises the sacrifice of the individual to become part of a greater whole. In all castes, age and experience are venerated. It is common for Tau to bear a single scalp lock, sometimes adorned with ornamented ringlets indicative of rank. The more elaborate the decoration on the scalp lock, the higher the rank and position. Also, no matter which caste the Tau is from, the higher up his position, the more he will be surrounded by technological upgrades and gadgets, such as drones or larger communication vanes.

As different as each of the castes are, all are possessed with the same unwavering self-confidence – each is assured that the 'Tau way' is manifestly superior to anything non-Tau. They are united in the common cause of expanding their empire in the name of the Greater Good.

THE TAU ALPHABET

⌏.....A	⌏.....I/Y	⌏.....S
⌏.....B	⌏.....J	⌏.....T
⌏.....C/K	⌏.....L	⌏.....U
⌏.....D	⌏.....M	⌏.....W
⌏.....E	⌏.....N	⌏.....X
⌏.....F/V	⌏.....O	
⌏.....G	⌏.....P	
⌏.....H	⌏.....R	



MARCH OF CONQUEST

The Tau have developed their own mode of timekeeping based on the annual cycle of T'au, a unit called a tau'cyr. Except on human planets that are still in the process of being subsumed, the Tau do not use the Imperium's dating system. However, for ease of translation, we have done so here.

789.M35 Land's Vision

The Adeptus Mechanicus Explorator vessel Land's Vision makes the first discovery of primitive Tau.

791.M36 End of the Mont'au

Strange lights are seen and the Ethereals arrive.

502.M37-956.M38 The Great Expansion

A time of great scientific and cultural evolution, during which the Tau advance into space, colonising planets as far as their conventionally fuelled spacecraft will take them

533.M37 First Colony

The Tau colonise their largest moon, Lu'val; this is their first off-world holding.

756.M37 Tau'n Established

Ethereals declare the colonies centred around the planet Tau'n will become their own sept – or realm, governed centrally from Tau'n, the sept world or prime planet. This is the first of many star systems to be colonised.

893.M37 Welcome Additions

The Poctroon become the first sentient race to join the Tau Empire, although within a few generations, disease destroys their indigenous population. The Tau, whose physiology is fortunately immune to the plague, inherit the Poctroon homeworld, turning it into the prime world of what will become Bork'an Sept. The Nicassar become the first race to join the Tau Empire and survive long enough to tell about it.

606.M38 to 792.M38 Campaign of Cleansing

The first prolonged campaign against the Orks. The Tau suffer many defeats but are ultimately able to eradicate the greenskins, thanks in part to the Earth caste refinement of the first pulse rifle. Dal'yth Sept is founded.

844.M38 The Union of Tau and Kroot

In order to combat Orks, the fortunate alliance between Tau and Kroot is established. Within a decade, the Water caste has established embassies upon Pech, the capital world of the Kroot realm.

018.M39 Second Sphere Expansion

The Ethereal Supreme, Aun Wei of the Whispered Wisdom, gives the signal to begin the long-planned Second Sphere Expansion. Aun Wei's famous speech is well remembered, ending with 'the nod that launched a million ships'. With new advances in propulsion technology and an already established space empire, the second expansion is marked by more contact with aliens and larger wars.

053.M39 A New Ally

The planet Vespida is absorbed into D'yanoi Sept. They had long been courted by the Water caste – but little was established save for crystal trade agreements. Within days of Ethereals' involvement, the Vespida Strain leaders convert wholeheartedly to the cause of the Greater Good.

383.M39 N'dras Colonised

Despite Earth caste reservations, from those who want to study inexplicable sensor readings, the planet N'dras is chosen by the Ethereal Council as the prime world of a new sept.

576.M39 Steady Advancement

Improvements to anti-grav motors and new battlesuit technology (the T-series prototypes) help the Fire caste complete the annexation of Tash'var Sept.

876.M39 Mistaken Identity

War is declared upon the cruel raiders victimizing the new colonies of Ke'lshan. Believing they have tracked their foes down, the Tau instead destroy the Eldar maiden world of Lilarus. Future relationships continue to be strained.

600.M40 Vior'la Triumphant!

A massive Ork fleet invades Vior'la Sept but is defeated by a masterful campaign. Vior'la annually passes through a gap between its two stars, a time called the Trial by Fire. It causes deadly plasma storms to ravage the planet, whose inhabitants survive by closing protective domes around their cities. Ork Warlord Garskrak and his invading army are lured into this deadly storm where they are utterly destroyed by the raging plasma radiation.

896.M40 Mass Migration

The greatest Water caste envoy, Por'O Dal'yth Kais Twi Lui'tan, better known as the Golden Ambassador, leads the effort to recruit alien worlds into the Tau Empire. During this period the Thraxians, Greet, and Formosians are welcomed into the fold. The Hrud and Arachen reject the proposals and are driven out of the region.

651.M41 A Legend is Born

The birth of Commander Puretide, the pride of the Dal'yth Sept. His brilliant campaigns later conquer half a dozen star systems. Under his authority, the Tau envelop those who can be embraced, seize what can be conquered and obliterate those who defy the Greater Good.

731.M41 The Once and Future Master

The elderly Commander Puretide is urged to view the new colonies across the Damocles Gulf before retiring. While inspecting a colony, Puretide is wounded during a raid. Unable to walk again, the most revered of military leaders spends his remaining years atop Mount Kan'ji, on Dal'yth, where he is kept alive for many more decades. Only those who attain perfect scores at the Fire caste academies are sent to sit at Puretide's hover-throne and learn his wisdom. Thanks to Earth caste holographic technology, this tradition is still maintained, although few students are deemed worthy of receiving this high honour.

733.M41 The Arkunasha War

A decade-long war in which a populous Tau colony is besieged by Orks. It is especially notable for the rise of the brilliant Puretide protégé named Commander Farsight.

742.M41 The Damocles Crusade

The Tau Empire comes under attack by an armada of the Imperium's warships on a crusade to reclaim their long-neglected territory. It is a bloody campaign, which is finally stymied at Dal'yth Prime. The retreat of Imperial forces marks the end of the Second Sphere Expansion.

745.M41 The Stasis Chamber

Aun 'Va makes the decision to place the favoured pupils of the rapidly declining Commander Puretide into stasis using prototype technology being developed for deep space travel – This allows O'Shaserra and a few select other to be recalled at later need.

760.M41 Rogue Commander

Following the Damocles Crusade, Commander Farsight recaptures much of the lost territory. However, the famed Commander defies orders to return, instead establishing a string of fortified planets known as the Farsight Enclaves.

813.M41 Cano'var Destroyed

The Tau world of Cano'var is overwhelmed. Transmissions show robotic creatures using unidentified energy weapons.

815.M41 Ally Unlooked For

An Ork invasion under Warlord Grog advances into the Tau Empire. The populated Tau world of Atari Vo bears the brunt of the attack before finally being defeated by the combined forces of Dal'yth Sept and an unlikely ally – Commander Farsight and his bodyguard cadre.

897.M41 to 903.M41 A New Menace

Tyranid Hive Fleet Gorgon smashes into the fringe of the Tau Empire and claws inwards before being ultimately defeated upon the sept world of Ke'lsan with the help of unlikely allies in the form of a fleet of ships from the Imperium of Mankind.

975.M41 Great War of Confederation

Many septs, led by Vior'la, combine to hold off the single largest Ork Waaagh! to have penetrated the Tau Empire. This campaign is also notable for the brilliant tactics and battle record of a shas'o recently awoken from stasis, who there earns the name Shadowsun.

989.M41 Lagan System

Decades of Water caste work has converted many human worlds in the Lagan System. With the help of Expeditionary Cadres, the star system is graded a class 1 colony, moving steadily towards becoming a fully fledged sept. However, all this preparation comes to naught as the sector becomes a war zone, targeted for xenos cleansing by the Ultramarines Space Marines Chapter. Many colonists are slain.

993.M41 The Nimbosa Annexation

Commander Brightsword, a student of Farsight's way of war, leads an attack to claim the Imperial world of Nimbosa. By the time the Imperium brings reinforcements, the Tau are prepared to defend their new planet. The fighting culminates with the infamous Koloth Gorge Massacre, where the forces of the Imperial Guard are so brutally slaughtered that Brightsword is censured, summoned back to Tau due to the remorselessness of his acts. Since this attack, the planet has changed hands several more times and remains a war zone.

997.M41 to present – The Third Sphere Expansion

After careful preparation, the new Ethereal Supreme, Aun Va, launches the Third Sphere Expansion.

310.997.M41 Ksi'm'yen Established

The first sept of the Third Sphere Expansion is declared and used as a staging ground for further advancement.

525.997.M41 Defence of the Farsight Enclaves

With his spearhead of eighty XV8 Crisis Teams, Commander Farsight leads a counter-attack against a tendrill of Hive Fleet Kraken that has entered his territory.

998.M41 T'ros

The Tau complete their annexation of what was previously the Imperial planet of Taros. It becomes the prime planet of a new sept; its remaining humans are considered gue'vesa citizens of the Tau Empire and are congratulated on the wisdom of their decision.

103.999.M41 Shas'O'Kais Triumphant

It is unknown when Shas'O'Kais, another of Puretide's former protégés, emerged from stasis, but it is he that leads the victories that establish the Fi'rios Sept at this time.

303.999.M41 Defeat at Zeist

An Imperial counterthrust attacks the colonies in the Zeist sector. The Space Marines drive the Tau from many worlds in the sector, and while the losses are regrettable, the gains elsewhere are on such a scale that, even to the casualty-conscious Tau, Shadowsun's diversion seems not just acceptable, but shrewd.

757.999.M41 Mu'gulath Bay

In the largest battle of the Third Sphere Expansion, Commander Shadowsun leads the attack at Mu'gulath Bay, beginning the rout of human forces now known as the Path of Blood. It is a bright day for the Tau, who saw a foe with vastly superior numbers crushed. No less than twelve advanced weapon prototypes were successfully deployed in the campaign, with only the fusion reactor meltdown that destroyed Mu'gulath's moon proving a failure.

TIME OF THE NEW BEGINNING

A time of great change is at hand. The old powers of the galaxy, corrupt and bloated as they are, struggle in what is surely their death throes. Such is the cycle, for new growth pushes through old, new stars form out of the dust of suns gone supernova in ages past. In the galaxy's far east, a new power is rising; its destiny will not be denied.

The Eastern Fringe is a war zone. The Fire caste military machine has stormed across a wide front, waging rapid strike warfare, exterminating resistance and paving the way for the seeding colonies that follow directly behind the fighting spearheads. Many of the planets and star systems that have fallen before their onslaught were once under the Imperium of Mankind's control. Intercepted messages confirm what high-ranking captives and alien collaborators inveigled by the Water caste have also said – the Imperium's frontier worlds have had their defences stripped to almost nonexistent levels and no further help is coming to them.

A NEW SUN RISING

Whether willingly, under the intimidating threat of a pulse rifle, or after a series of crushing defeats in bloody battles, many populations now find themselves as part of the growing Tau Empire. In this dark age of war and barbarity, where no quarter is asked and none given, any alien – be they human, Pakasar, N'deemi or any of a multitude of other races – all have deep set fears and expectations of what a planetary takeover will be like. Most have heard accounts or rumours of brutal Ork enslavement, insidious Hrud infestations or horrific tortures at the hands of cruel Eldar overseers. While the Tau fight to win, they will, after each of their victories, repeat their offers for peaceful surrender. What happens when their opponents finally accept the Tau's terms for a ceasefire is shockingly civil.

At the first stages of a takeover, all changes are subtle. Tau interpreters move amongst the people, speaking the native language and seeking to calm their fears, telling them to embrace change and promising them that soon they will see the light of a Greater Good. These ambassadors are escorted by phalanxes of armoured Tau warriors and, while they are peaceful, they brook no violence, whether upon their own kind or even between factions within the indigenous population. At major institutions, the Tau set up temporary camps, summoning the upper echelons of the previous rule for discussions. The directing class of Tau, the tall and elegant ones known as Ethereals, arrive at these meetings. Important alien dignitaries are whisked off for private conferences – often returning with comforting plans of how the situation will progress, although sometimes never returning at all. Teams of Tau workers arrive with strange machines – flocks of worker drones aiding their endeavours. They test the air, water, buildings, ground, resources and even the people themselves, their hand-held sensors beeping, and talking back to these workers in the strange, but not unpleasant sounding Tau language.

By the second stages of a population's entry into the Tau Empire, more evidence of the Tau's presence can be discerned. The distinctive streamlined style of Tau buildings rise from the planet's surface in gleaming superiority.

Mechanical upgrades, cleaner air, and countless efficiency-aiding devices are installed. Much of this equipment arrives pre-fabricated, lowered into position by massive dropships that descend from orbit. Planetary rule is maintained by councils of the native race, although they will quietly report to Tau advisors. Occasionally, their decisions are overruled by the Tau, but such instances decrease with time. Native customs are allowed and studied by the Tau, and so long as they do not inhibit efficiency, they are allowed to continue. Over the years, new customs are introduced and the cultures show signs of amalgamation – although the one constant is that the Tau are always treated as first amongst equals.

Based on the number of planets seized in the initial phase of the Third Sphere Expansion, the logistical teams within the Water caste have been projecting likely outcomes – to aid the Ethereals' plan making. According to their estimations, the Tau will more than double their holdings – that is, the number of occupied planets in the Tau Empire – within the next 60 tau'cyr, a time period roughly equivalent to 50 Terran years. The volume of captured alien worlds (and especially Imperial worlds, with their vast resources and large populations) are fuelling further growth at an exponential rate. When apprised of these mathematical predictions, the Ethereal High Council simply nod; the plan is moving apace. On dozens of worlds, a new day is rising.

FURTHER ENLIGHTENMENT

In the aftermath of a fierce battle, even as fires still blaze upon the newly renamed planet of Mu'gulath Bay, Commander Shadowsun turns her attentions onwards. With one of the most heavily defended of Imperial worlds in the system conquered and burning beneath her feet, many new courses are now open for colonisation. To take advantage of them, the Tau must move quickly.

Advanced scouts report that along the new frontier, the Imperium is girding for battle, preparing to meet the upcoming Tau invasion forces with everything they have. Pathfinders who infiltrated the quarantined Red Star systems send disturbing news, their transmissions indicating trouble could well be coming from those anarchic Ork-held sectors. Many signs point to the greenskins massing, perhaps readying to launch another one of their crusades.

Shadowsun knows that what Ethereal Supreme Aun'Va said is true – 'the galaxy is full of darkness and barbarism – only we can bring enlightenment to such a black void.' At her command, no less than eight different battle fleets disembark from the clogged atmosphere that surrounds Mu'gulath Bay. Each one is a Fire caste spearhead – each one on a course for battle. History has proven that there is no foe the Tau can not overcome, and soon, the very stars themselves will be reformed in the cause of the Greater Good.



FORCES OF THE TAU EMPIRE

This section of the book details the forces used by the Tau – their vehicles, their units and the special characters that lead them to war. Each entry describes the unit and gives the specific rules you will need in order to use them in your games. The Army of the Third Sphere section (pg 94-103) refers back to these entries. The second part of this section, known as the Arsenal of Expansion, details the armoury of weapons and equipment available to each Tau unit. The exception is unique items of wargear, or Signature Systems; details for these items can be found with the special characters to which they belong.

TAU EMPIRE SPECIAL RULES

The Tau Empire uses a number of special rules that are common to several units, as denoted in the unit entries.

BONDING KNIFE RITUAL

Many Tau groupings are 'bonded' to one another, that is, they have gone through the solemn and bloody ceremony known in the Tau language as the *ta'lissera* – the Bonding Knife Ritual. Those within such a team swear to support one another at all costs for the rest of their lives. They will even willingly sacrifice their own lives in order to better aid their comrades. It is an ennobling ritual and symbolic of the driving force behind the Tau Empire, that an individual must submit his individuality to the greater purpose of the community.

A unit consisting entirely of models with this special rule (not counting drones) benefits from Heroic Morale, even if they are not accompanied by an Independent Character.



SUPPORTING FIRE

Fire caste doctrine, as laid down in the Code of Fire, instructs all warriors to fight closely together, with each member of a team doing his utmost to protect not just his comrades, but also nearby teams in his cadre. Using overlapping fields of fire, all teams provide mutual support on the battlefield.

When an enemy unit declares a charge, all friendly models with this special rule in units within 6" of the charging unit's target can choose to fire Overwatch as if they were also targets of the charge. Remember that a unit can still only fire Overwatch once each phase.

WARLORD TRAITS

On the field of battle, a Tau force can be led by a Commander or by an Ethereal. Commanders are experienced Fire Warriors who have moved through the ranks, displaying personal heroics and a true grasp of the art of war. Ethereals use their mysterious sway over the Tau and their auxiliaries to inspire the troops to extreme acts of valour and sacrifice. These leaders have honed their personal abilities, and in a tightly contested clash, these skills can be the difference between victory and defeat.

When generating Warlord Traits, a Commander or Ethereal may either roll on one of the Warlord Traits tables in the Warhammer 40,000 rulebook, or roll on the table presented on the right.

WARLORD TRAITS TABLE

D6 WARLORD TRAIT

- 1 **Precision of the Skilled Hunter.** *No foe can evade the Warlord once they have fallen under his crosshairs.* Enemy models cannot take Look Out, Sir rolls against your Warlord's shooting attacks. If your Warlord has no ranged weapons, re-roll this result.
- 2 **Through Unity, Devastation.** *This Warlord coordinates his warriors' arcs of fire so that his foes are caught in a lethal crossfire.* One use only. Declare your Warlord is using this ability at the start of one of your Shooting phases. For the duration of the phase, all friendly units from this codex within 12" of the Warlord re-roll To Hit rolls of 1.
- 3 **A Ghost Who Walks Among Us.** *This Warlord has mastered the battlesuit art of striking at his target while evading retribution.* The Warlord, and his unit, move 3D6" when making Jet Pack thrust moves. If your Warlord is not Jet Pack Infantry, re-roll this result.
- 4 **Exemplar of the Selfless Cause.** *The Warlord's heroic example inspires his warriors to ever greater acts of courage and self-sacrifice.* One use only. Declare your Warlord is using this ability at the start of one of your Movement phases. All friendly units from this codex on the battlefield that have gone to ground and are no longer considered gone to ground and can move, shoot and charge normally this turn.
- 5 **Predator of the Skies.** *A sky-hunter beyond compare, no aircraft or skyborne monster is safe from the sights of this Warlord's weapons.* One use only. Declare your Warlord is using this ability at the start of one of your Shooting phases. For that phase, the Warlord, and his unit, have the Skyfire special rule.
- 6 **Through Boldness, Victory.** *Using speed and sheer aggression, the Warlord pushes his forces as he seeks to land a decisive offensive blow upon the enemy.* Your Warlord, and any unit he joins, does not scatter when arriving by Deep Strike. If your Warlord cannot Deep Strike, re-roll this result.

DRONES

Tau Drones are independent artificial intelligences, programmed to support and protect the Tau and their allies in battle.

A unit comprised entirely of drones is a non-scoring, non-denial unit. Drones do not have the Bulky special rule.

UNIT UPGRADE DRONES

Drones taken as upgrades for a unit act as additional squad members in all regards. They are unable to leave their unit and must maintain unit coherency with their unit at all times. Drones taken as upgrades cannot purchase options, however, and so do not pay for them if their unit does so.

For example: If a unit of six Fire Warriors takes two Gun Drones and purchases EMP grenades, they only pay 12 points for the EMP grenades (2 points for each Fire Warrior in the squad).

INDEPENDENT CHARACTERS AND DRONES

Independent Characters who have taken drones as upgrades are still permitted to join units, in which case both the character and his drones join the unit. If the Independent Character then leaves the unit, all his surviving drones also leave the unit, forming a separate unit with him.

If the Independent Character is killed whilst part of a unit, his surviving drones are thereafter part of that unit and cannot leave it; the Independent Character's unit has, for the purposes of Victory Points, been destroyed.

If the Independent Character is killed while he is not joined to another unit, do not remove any surviving drones – the unit is not destroyed until all the drones have been destroyed as well. These drones cannot join other units. Another Independent Character can join the surviving drones, but as they are not his upgrades, he cannot take them with him if he then joins another unit.

VEHICLE DRONES

Some vehicles include two drones – these start the game attached to the vehicle.

ATTACHED DRONES

Whilst attached to the vehicle, drones are treated as embarked passengers (although they don't count against a vehicle's Transport Capacity and they can even be attached to a vehicle that doesn't have a Transport Capacity). This means that while they are attached, they can make shooting attacks as if they were passengers shooting from Fire Points, using their location on the vehicle to determine line of sight, range etc. Unlike other models shooting from Fire Points, attached drones must shoot at the same target as the vehicle they are attached to. Target Acquired abilities used by a Tau vehicle, or vehicle squadron, also apply to any attached drones in the unit.

If a vehicle is destroyed before it has detached its drones, the drones are automatically destroyed along with it.

DETACHING DRONES

During any friendly Movement phase, drones may detach from their vehicle in the same way as Infantry disembarking from an Open-topped Transport. All drones from a vehicle or vehicle squadron must detach at the same time – they then form a single new unit.

After detaching, drones cannot re-attach to any vehicle, but they can embark on Transport vehicles in the same manner as other drones.

Drones that started the game attached to a vehicle do not award Victory Points when destroyed. In addition, your opponent only needs to destroy the vehicle, and not that vehicle's detached drones as well, to be awarded any Victory Points it is worth.



DRONES

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv	Unit Type
Gun Drone	2	2	3	4	1	4	1	7	4+	Jet Pack Infantry (Drone)
Marker Drone	2	2	3	4	1	4	1	7	4+	Jet Pack Infantry (Drone)
Missile Drone	2	2	3	4	1	4	1	7	4+	Jet Pack Infantry (Drone)
Shield Drone	2	2	3	4	1	4	1	7	4+	Jet Pack Infantry (Drone)

GUN DRONE

Wargear:

- Twin-linked pulse carbine (pg 66)

Special Rules:

- Supporting Fire

MARKER DRONE

Wargear:

- Markerlight (pg 68)

Special Rules:

- Supporting Fire

MISSILE DRONE

Wargear:

- Missile pod (pg 66)

Special Rules:

- Supporting Fire

SHIELD DRONE

Wargear:

- Shield generator (pg 69)

Special Rules:

- Supporting Fire

COMMANDERS

A Commander, or in the language of the Tau, a 'shas'o', is the highest rank a Fire Warrior can obtain. It is a position of great honour, and can only be attained after years progressing through the ranks – there are no shortcuts or exceptions. The final test to advance from the shas'el level is to have repeated success on the battlefield. To be named shas'o is to be proven a master in the martial arts, a first rate tactician and a true disciple of the art of war.

Depending on their situation, sept and renown, a Tau Commander can be called upon to lead anything from a cadre to a coalition. The number and size of previous commands is reflected in the rings confining their long scalp lock. Those new to the rank might be given a single cadre, a force numbering a hundred or so warriors, whilst the greatest military leaders, those whose names and victories are most honoured, can call countless millions to arms with but a single word.

There are vast differences in approach and philosophy between the varied Tau Fire caste leaders. Some Tau Commanders prefer to lead from the front – pushing their XV8 Crisis battlesuits to their fullest. The Commanders of the Vior'la, Tash'var and Ke'lshan are particularly noted for their personal kills, often accompanied into the thick of battle by an XV8 Crisis Bodyguard Team. Conversely, Tau

Commanders that hail from the Elsy'eir and T'olku Septs are typically considered more cerebral in nature, ordering their troops from behind the front lines and only entering the fray themselves upon great need.

There are times when hubris gets the better of these proud military masters, and in such situations, the council of the Ethereals reins the Commanders back in. It is constantly said that 'there is no substitute for victory, but this is balanced by the virtues of the Code of Fire and the Greater Good.' A triumph that sustains more losses than were necessary does not service the true needs of the Tau. Personal heroics, while lauded, are never an end unto themselves. It is a rare that a *mal'la* must take place – a ritual discipline meted out by the Ethereals to those deemed to have erred in judgement in regards to the Greater Good.

Upon attaining the rank of shas'o, a member of the Fire caste will serve his sept until death or until he has earned honoured retirement, though the most successful Commanders are asked to join the military high command, or *shas'ar'tol*. Each of the Spheres of Expansion has its notable Commanders – great heroes whose teachings are still used at the Fire caste academies. There, the ways of the Wise Hunter, a great conqueror of the initial expansions, can be heard, as well as those of Commander Quickstrike, hero of the Bork'an Sept. Many references are made to Commander Truestar, the female military leader whose brilliant career was marred by a single tragic error, and to the Desert Beast, the wily Commander Dawnstrike, whose exploits of feigned retreat are often emulated, but never bettered. Yet of all these great lords of the Fire caste, there are none whose battle record can come close to equaling that of Commander Puretide, the noble master whose name was behind the greatest victories of the triumphant Second Sphere Expansion.



	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Commander	4	5	5	4	4	3	4	10	3+

UNIT TYPE: Jet Pack Infantry (Character).

WARGEAR: Crisis battlesuit (pg 70).

SPECIAL RULES: Independent Character, Supporting Fire (pg 32), Very Bulky.

'THERE ARE CERTAIN THINGS IN WAR, OF WHICH THE FIRE CASTE COMMANDER ALONE COMPREHENDS THE IMPORTANCE. IT IS NOT HIS RIGHT, BUT RATHER HIS RESPONSIBILITY, TO SEND THOUSANDS TO THEIR DEATHS IF MILLIONS WILL PREVAIL. THAT IS THE HEAVIEST BURDEN OF COMMAND, AND IT MUST BE SHOULDERED, ALONE.'

- COMMANDER PURETIDE - THE NINETY-NINTH MEDITATION ON THE WAY OF THE COMMANDER.

ETHEREALS

The Ethereals make up the ruling caste within Tau society – born to counsel, advise and steer their comrades towards the chosen path. They embody the roles of royalty and the priesthood, and the deference paid to them is the closest thing to mysticism in Tau society. For weighty decisions, a wise Ethereal will take counsel from the senior members of each caste, although ultimate sovereignty falls upon him and him alone. The Ethereals find themselves in a binding role – guiding the other castes to work together for the Greater Good. An Ethereal must be a consummate leader and motivator: pushing the Earth caste for more practical innovations, setting firm negotiation goals for the Water caste to strive for, giving perimeters to the great fleets of the Air caste and directing the sometimes overzealous aggressions of the Fire caste.



The absolute control which Ethereals exhibit over the other castes of the Tau Empire is a mystery. Many assume such manipulation is a form of innate psychic ability; others feel that the faultless loyalty the Ethereals inspire has been contrived by some unseen technology, or is even

the result of some pheromone-based reaction. The most primitive races Tau forces have encountered believe the Ethereals are deified beings, leaders of an advanced people chosen for greatness. Naturally, the Ethereals themselves help propagate and encourage this particular myth. As the Tau do their utmost to prevent any Ethereal from being slain or captured, there have been few opportunities to conduct tests, and those that have been performed offer no conclusions, and far more questions.

The presence of an Ethereal is motivational, but they are not mere figureheads; they are also reverential leaders for whom any Tau would willingly lay down their life. By invoking the elemental truths, an Ethereal can inspire those around him to perform feats above and beyond what is normally considered possible – bravery in the face of certain death, an increased focus as enemies draw near, an ability to withstand crippling pain or a sudden celerity that allows them to maintain a weight of fire even on the move. The Tau themselves do not question the source of these powers, accepting the greatness of their leaders on faith.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Ethereal	4	3	3	3	2	3	3	10	-

UNIT TYPE: Infantry (Character).

SPECIAL RULES: Independent Character, Stubborn.

Failure is Not An Option: All friendly models from this codex within 12" of the Ethereal use his Leadership for Fear, Morale, Pinning and Regroup tests. However, if the Ethereal is removed as a casualty in a mission that uses Victory Points, your opponent gains one additional Victory Point.

Invocation of the Elements: At the start of each of the Ethereal's Movement phases, choose one of the four elemental powers listed below to invoke. The Ethereal, and all friendly non-vehicle models from this codex in units within 12", benefit from the effects of the elemental power until the start of the Ethereal's next Movement phase. If the Ethereal is slain, the elemental power ends immediately.

- **Calm of Tides:** Affected models have the Stubborn special rule.
- **Storm of Fire:** Affected models fire an extra shot with pulse weapons (pg 66) when firing at a target within half the weapon's maximum range. This does not affect pulse bombs, but includes Kroot rifles firing pulse rounds. Storm of Fire can only affect a unit once per turn, regardless of how many Ethereals invoke it.
- **Sense of Stone:** Affected models have the Feel No Pain (6+) special rule.
- **Zephyr's Grace:** Affected models can fire Snap Shots after running.



CADRE FIREBLADES

Fireblades are the most grizzled and seasoned Fire Warriors of their cadre, whose skill at the Fire Warrior's art of battle leads them to eschew battlesuit technology. They are excellent field leaders and their long experience has taught them exactly where to place shots to maximise damage. It is on the firing line that a Cadre Fireblade really comes into his own. There, they radiate a steadying calm, directing their Fire Warriors to maintain accurate fire no matter the circumstances, instilling each trooper with the precision and efficiency that is the hallmark of thousands of years of martial teachings.

Whether breaking the impetus of an advancing horde of greenskins or seeking to bring down the heavily armoured Space Marines of the Imperium, no one knows a Fire Warrior's strength better than a Cadre Fireblade. A Cadre Fireblade will extol what they believe to be the Tau's strength – overwhelming infantry firepower! Theirs is the ability to drive and direct Fire Warriors as they pour volley after volley of merciless pulse fire onto the target.

Fireblades were once Fire Warrior troopers like any other in the cadre, and as they gained experience, they rose to become shas'ui: veterans and squad leaders. Whereas most of these seasoned leaders eventually choose the great honour of donning a battlesuit, there are a few who instead

prefer to remain with the Fire Warriors. For some, this is a practical realisation that the tactical versatility required by Crisis or Stealth Teams eludes them; for others, it is simply a preference to remain squarely situated with the heart of any Tau gunline.

The military path that takes a soldier to become a Cadre Fireblade can never rise as high as the rank of shas'o – they are limited to a level just beneath that of shas'el. Nor does the title carry with it the élan associated with those who wear a battlesuit. Nonetheless, Cadre Fireblade, or shas'nel in the Tau language, is a highly respected role – not least because of their willingness to forgo prestige. The constant drilling and workman-like efficiency of a Cadre Fireblade is, to the Tau, a willing embrace of their most beloved concept, the Tau'va – the Greater Good.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Cadre Fireblade	4	5	3	3	3	3	3	9	4+

UNIT TYPE: Infantry (Character).

WARGEAR: Combat armour (pg 70), pulse rifle (pg 66), photon grenades, markerlight (pg 68).

SPECIAL RULES: Independent Character, Split Fire, Supporting Fire (pg 32).

Volley Fire: If the Cadre Fireblade, and every model in his unit, remains stationary in the Movement phase, their pulse rifles and pulse carbines each fire an additional shot in the Shooting phase.



THE FIRE CASTE PROGRESSION

Raised with the rigours of communal drill, the Fire caste academies train physical fitness, marksmanship, small unit tactics and the importance of supporting fire. When a Fire Warrior is old enough, he or she enters active service as a line trooper – a shas'la. After four years 'on the line', each soldier must take a Trial by Fire. If they pass this ancient ritual (which varies from sept to sept) then they are fit to become a shas'ui – a veteran considered battlesuit-worthy. It is a position of great honour amongst the Tau, and the goal of every member of the Fire caste. After surviving a further four years, a shas'ui can take a second Trial, and successful participants advance yet again, earning the title of shas'vre – a true hero of the Fire caste. A veteran who honours this more substantial role and survives another four years becomes eligible to undertake a third Trial if he wishes and, if he is still alive by the end, will become a Commander-in-training, or shas'el. Those who excel in this leading role are promoted to shas'o, a full Commander. Only Commanders are allowed to retire from active service, where they might be honoured to join the council of advisors and play a greater part in Tau politics. Other than death, this is the only way to leave the Tau military.

FIRE WARRIORS

To be born into the Fire caste is to be born for battle. Bred for generations to maximise size and strength, these warriors-to-be are enrolled in Fire caste academies as soon as they can walk, institutions whose sole purpose is to produce soldiers to serve the growing Tau Empire. There they are rigorously prepared, in mind and body, to become Fire Warriors – the professional infantry that forms the backbone of the Hunter Cadres of every sept. It is said with pride that behind every Fire Warrior stands thousands of years of training in the military arts and instruction in the laws of the Code of Fire: honour, obedience, duty and self-sacrifice.

Tau Fire Warriors are superbly equipped for battle and a large part of their training is to acclimate themselves with the use of their high-tech gear. All Fire Warriors wear multi-layered body armour that provides defence against high velocity or explosive rounds. Thanks to their mastery of metal fusions, the armour is lightweight, especially in comparison to conventional materials – such as those used by Orks or the Imperium. The enlarged sinistral shoulder pad is particularly useful, as Fire Warriors are trained to use this as a shield, often positioning it towards incoming fire to increase their protection. Their helmets contain a number of digitised aids, including sensors, target-tracking readouts, air quality levels and communications uplinks.

The arsenal available to Fire Warriors is formidable, with individuals carrying either a pulse rifle or a pulse carbine. With this advanced armament, Fire Warriors can lay down a withering fusillade upon their foes. Their range and hitting power outclasses the standard weapons of every race the Tau have yet encountered. Should their enemies advance too close, Fire Warriors are equipped with disc-like photon grenades, defensive devices which explode with a dazzling blast of multi-spectrum light to disorient foes. Although their potent pulse weapons can penetrate the armour of light vehicles, against heavier armour, Fire Warriors often employ EMP grenades. These are technical marvels that send out an electromagnetic pulse on detonation which can overload electronic circuitry, causing anything from minor malfunctions to complete meltdowns.

Fire Warrior Teams consist of between six and twelve warriors. A team leader, or shas'ui, is a veteran warrior whose experience has prepared him to command. A shas'ui can draw upon additional equipment to aid both the team and the cadre, such as drones or a markerlight. Before the battle, the shas'ui will receive the orders for his Fire Warrior Team via the relay comms, although due to the haphazard nature of war, these goals often change, and a shas'ui is expected to lead his team to fluidly react to every situation.

The Fire caste puts utmost importance on acting in a coordinated fashion upon the battlefield. Needless sacrifices or inadequately supporting nearby teams are considered great failures. Fire Warrior Teams drill endlessly in setting up overlapping fields of fire and positioning themselves so that they can efficiently protect other teams should they be attacked. Such rigorous training produces Fire Warriors to whom covering fire is second nature – able to send volleys



of pulse fire at a foe closing upon their comrades with a single command flashed through the comm-system. While a Fire Warrior Team is formidable in its own right, an interlocking cadre of teams is even stronger than the sum of its parts. Such inter-unit dynamics have foiled many foes. During the Tau victories over the Orks during the Great War of Confederation, time and again the waves of greenskins almost closed with the Tau gunlines, only to find their final charge defeated by the literal wall of pulse fire that the combined teams discharged. It is a lesson that resounds through the Fire caste academies – 'only by supporting our comrades can we defeat the superior numbers of our foes'.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Fire Warrior	2	3	3	3	1	2	1	7	4+
Fire Warrior Shas'ui	2	3	3	3	1	2	2	8	4+

UNIT TYPE: Infantry.

Fire Warrior Shas'ui is Infantry (Character).

WARGEAR: Combat armour (pg 70), pulse rifle (pg 66), photon grenades.

SPECIAL RULES: Supporting Fire (pg 32).

PATHFINDERS

Light reconnaissance units, Pathfinder Teams are the eyes and ears of their Commander in a way no drone can yet emulate. A Pathfinder's foremost role is not to engage the enemy, but instead to maximise the efficiency of the rest of their cadre. They operate ahead of their comrades, close to their foe, to accurately scout the enemy. In such a position, a Pathfinder's life is always under threat. For this reason and more, Pathfinders are held in high regard by every caste.

They are not protected by a battlesuit or stealth field generators, yet they are far from helpless. A Pathfinder's standard kit includes a pulse carbine – ideal for the close-ranged firefights they so frequently find themselves in. Pathfinders also bear markerlights to guide the firepower of the rest of the cadre against optimal targets. Holding a markerlight on a distant enemy while your own position is being overrun is a selfless act, but Pathfinders epitomise the Greater Good, and by their actions, many battles are won.

By infiltrating the battlefield, they can also activate homing beacons or positional relays – bringing reinforcements to the fray with greater precision. Some teams also carry a few rail rifles – especially useful against power armoured infantry. An even more recent addition to the Pathfinder's arsenal is the ion rifle. Able to fire in two distinct modes, the ion rifle can vaporise light vehicles, but is unstable when

overcharged. Many Pathfinder shas'uis employ drones, and in the Third Sphere Expansion, new variants specially designed to assist Pathfinder Teams have been developed.

Trading lives for ground is anathema to the Tau, and the Fire caste is trained to retreat and fight another day. While every sept has tales of crafty Pathfinders escaping against impossible odds, even the best-laid extraction plans can fall through. All Tau warriors are willing to lay down their lives for the Greater Good, but Pathfinders find self-sacrifice called for more often than all other cadre teams combined: during the early days of the Great War of Confederation, some septs reported Pathfinder casualty rates at 84% or higher. Despite this, or perhaps because of it, the Fire caste academies are inundated by volunteers wishing to be Pathfinders, eager to do their utmost for the Greater Good.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Pathfinder	2	3	3	3	1	2	1	7	5+
Pathfinder Shas'ui	2	3	3	3	1	2	2	8	5+

UNIT TYPE: Infantry. Pathfinder Shas'ui is Infantry (Character).

WARGEAR: Recon armour (pg 70), pulse carbine (pg 66), photon grenades, markerlight (pg 68).

SPECIAL RULES: Scouts, Supporting Fire (pg 32).

UPGRADES

Pathfinder Teams often field-test newly-developed drone types.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Grav-inhibitor Drone	2	2	3	4	1	4	1	7	4+
Pulse Accelerator Drone	2	2	3	4	1	4	1	7	4+
Recon Drone	2	2	3	4	2	4	1	7	4+

UNIT TYPE: Jet Pack Infantry (Drone).

WARGEAR:

Grav-inhibitor Drone: gravity wave projector (pg 69).

Pulse Accelerator Drone: pulse accelerator (pg 69).

Recon Drone: burst cannon (pg 65),

homing beacon (pg 69), positional relay (pg 69).

SPECIAL RULES: Supporting Fire (pg 32).

Turret Mounting (Recon Drone only). When a Recon Drone embarks on a Devilfish, it is treated exactly like an embarked passenger, but does not count towards Transport Capacity. When the Recon Drone is so embarked, the vehicle counts as having a homing beacon and positional relay.



DEVILFISH

The Devilfish armoured troop carrier is the workhorse of the Tau ground forces, granting the Fire caste infantry much-needed speed and tactical mobility. It can transport up to twelve fully armed and armoured Fire Warriors or Pathfinders into battle in relative safety and then provide mobile fire support once they disembark. The highly mechanised Hunter Cadres rely on Devilfish to ensure that their Fire Warriors can travel and deploy quickly to wherever their gunlines are most required.

Powered by a complex dual anti-grav and jet-propulsion motive system, the Devilfish seems to glide over a planet's surface. The anti-grav engines generate a 'cushion' for the Devilfish to float upon, and its armoured bulk is driven forwards by two powerful, multi-directional jet engines. By pivoting the propulsion units downwards, the Devilfish pilot can gain extra lift to clear obstacles, making the vehicle capable of boosting over obstacles and terrain that mundane tracked vehicles could never hope to traverse.



Mobility is essential for any Commander and the Devilfish allows the infantry to keep pace with the armoured gunships. Whether manoeuvring troops to deliver the killer offensive of a Mont'ka, or rushing them into ideal firing positions to ensure a Kauyon ambush is properly set, the Devilfish is often key to victory. But the Devilfish is not used merely to ferry troops to the battle lines. In addition to the fire of its burst cannon, the Devilfish is on hand to quickly extract troops should enemy formations penetrate too closely. Given the Tau's loathing of close combat, a common tactic is to redeploy their gunlines when enemy units approach too closely, whisking their troops out of harm's way to set up new firing perimeters elsewhere on the battlefield. This re-embarking and relocating tactic allows Pathfinders to escape encirclement and helps Fire Warriors to keep their foe at arm's length, better enabling them to whittle down the enemy with repeated volleys of pulse fire.

A more aggressive ploy, employed by all septs but made famous by those from Vior'la Sept, is a rapid delivery of Fire Warrior Teams into close range with an enemy target. Although a risky proposition, this allows disembarking units to emerge from their Devilfish to shoot point blank into their foe. When it works effectively, they drive back or destroy the enemy; however, failure to do so leaves the Tau vulnerable to assaults. These rapid counterattacks are a hallmark of Tau tactics and are often the final stroke in a well-planned Mont'ka. Such ploys are made even more effective by working in conjunction with other elements of the cadre, such as combining with other supporting firepower, coordinating to arrive at the same moment as incoming battlesuits, or having Pathfinders light up the target with markerlights.

The Devilfish itself is armed with a burst cannon – an ideal weapon to add suppressive fire in defence of any nearby allies. Two Gun Drones are also standard armament, able to lend the Devilfish their weight of fire, or detach on missions of their own. There are a number of upgrades that can augment the Devilfish, from seeker missiles, for extra power, to defensive options, like decoy launchers or target-shielding disruption pods.

Armour

BS	F	S	R	HP
3	12	11	10	3

Devilfish

UNIT TYPE: Vehicle (Tank, Skimmer, Transport).

WARGEAR: Burst cannon (pg 65), two Gun Drones (pg 33).

TRANSPORT:

Transport Capacity: Twelve models. A Devilfish may transport Drones, but may not transport models with the Bulky, Very Bulky or Extremely Bulky special rules.

Fire Points: None.

Access Points: One on each side and one to the rear.



XV8 CRISIS TEAMS

The XV8 Crisis battlesuit strikes a perfect balance between offensive capability, armoured protection, manoeuvrability and utility. It is a towering battlesuit, easily twice the size of the Fire Warrior who wears it. A wonder of Earth caste engineering, only the Tau could master the secrets of producing the dense nanocrystalline alloy that forms the thick protective armour of the XV8. When it comes to deflecting and withstanding damage, the XV8's armour is comparable to the ceramite used by the Imperium's Space Marines, but weighs substantially less.

Agile for its size, the XV8 is extremely manoeuvrable, as it mounts repulsor jet engines – another unique Earth caste invention that combines the functionality of a jet with anti-gravitic technology. These powerful thrusters allow the XV8 to vault battlefield obstacles and to make bounding leaps to gain advantageous firing positions, or to avoid incoming shots. By firing off the jets to slow descent, it is possible for a warrior in a XV8 Crisis battlesuit to make a combat drop – arriving to the battlefield suddenly by leaping from an airborne Orca or Manta craft.

While its protective armour and mobility are highly valued by the Tau, it is the ability of the XV8 battlesuit to carry multiple weapons and support systems that makes them so incredibly dangerous and versatile. Designed to compensate

for the recoil of light weapons fire, the XV8's weapon loadout can be easily altered to reflect mission requirements or the pilot's own personal preference. Additional upgrades, from multi-tracker fire-control systems, to homing beacons or shield generators, further enhance the fighting abilities of this impressive battlesuit.

To the Tau, the battlesuit is more than just a powerful weapon of war; it is also a symbol of great achievement. Only those Fire Warriors who prove themselves in battle earn the right to wear a battlesuit and bear the name shas'ui. To do so is a great honour, and means the Fire Warrior has passed his Trial by Fire. This is the aspiration of every Fire caste warrior, recognition of a mastery of the Code of Fire and noble service to the Greater Good.

XV8 CRISIS TEAMS

The XV8 Crisis Team is the most widely deployed of any Tau battlesuit formation, for they are the very epitome of Tau warfare – mobile, flexible and absolutely bristling with firepower. They are an elite force and often form the cutting edge of a Hunter Cadres' attacks; they can be used as a powerful reserve held by the Commander, to counter-attack against advancing foes or to deliver the final hammer blow that is unleashed to break the opposition once and for all.



Trained to operate either alone or, more commonly, in teams of two or three warriors, Crisis Teams can be equipped to handle a variety of battlefield roles. For instance, to combat vast numbers, a Crisis Team might employ many burst cannons, as its high rate of fire is ideal for scything down lightly armoured infantry. Against more powerful or heavily armoured foes, the ceramite-melting blasts fired from plasma rifles are preferable, while the close-ranged fusion blaster is unrivalled for tank-hunting teams.

Different septs have their own preferred weapon and support system fits in accordance with their proscribed tactics. For example, the Crisis Teams from Vior'la have a predilection for what is called the Sun Forge configuration – three XV8 Crisis battlesuits operating together in a formation known as a *ta'ro'cha* – 'three minds as one'. Each member of the Crisis Team is armed with a twin-linked fusion blaster and target lock, a combination that turned an entire Leman Russ tank company into piles of slag during the Tau counter-attacks on Dal'yth. In the dense street fights amidst the ruins of Nimbosa, the T'olku Sept employed a lone warrior in a battlesuit with a flamer, burst cannon and stimulant injector (the Lone Hunter configuration), which proved the most effective means of driving the many Imperial Guard regiments out of their defensive barricades.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Crisis Shas'ui	2	3	5	4	2	2	2	8	3+
Crisis Shas'vre	2	3	5	4	2	2	3	9	3+

UNIT TYPE: Jet Pack Infantry.

Crisis Shas'vre is Jet Pack Infantry (Character).

WARGEAR: Crisis battlesuit (pg 70).

SPECIAL RULES: Supporting Fire (pg 32), Very Bulky.

XV8 CRISIS BODYGUARD TEAMS

It is customary for many Commanders to choose some of the most experienced warriors from amongst the XV8 Crisis Teams to become their bodyguards – their *saz'nami*, or literally translated their 'close protection officers'. Only those veteran Fire Warriors with impeccable battle records who have reached the shas'vre level are considered worthy to serve their commander in such a capacity.

Crisis Bodyguard Teams are among the most respected of all Fire caste warriors, for they embody the philosophy of striving for the Greater Good. It is their duty to protect their Commander at all costs; they will even take incoming shots intended for their leader. Tau battle lore is rife with heroic tales of individuals leaping in front of their Commander to confront a monstrous beast, or in order to save him from a shot from some powerful energy weapon. Should it be necessary, an XV8 Crisis Bodyguard will sacrifice his own life in order to spare his Commander from certain death. It is considered a great disgrace for a Bodyguard to survive whilst his leader is slain; any who suffer such indignity often spend their remaining lifetime atoning for that which can ultimately have no forgiveness.

XV8 Crisis Bodyguard Teams can draw upon the latest cutting-edge battlesuit wargear – prototypes that are still being tested for standard issue. Commander Dawnstar, of the Dal'yth Sept, keeps his bodyguard outfitted in the rare VX8-02 Crisis Iridium battlesuits – a luxury that few other Commanders can arrange. Not surprisingly, the bolder a Commander is, the shorter the lifespan of his XV8 Crisis Bodyguard Team. Those who favour leading from the front, such as serving as the bait in a Kauyon strategy, or as part of the hammer blow in a Mont'ka, greatly increase their own risks. The hot-blooded Commanders of the Vior'la Sept must routinely recruit new bodyguards to replace those lost in battle. In response to this habitually aggressive approach, the master strategist Commander Puretide, who always preached of the importance of balance, would have repeated his oft-quoted remark: 'A wise leader must learn when and where to use his every asset to its best capability'. This wisdom recognises that a Commander flanked by two elite shas'vre warriors in Crisis battlesuit armour is a formidable formation, more than capable of shrugging off enemy shots and dealing out prodigious amounts of firepower. However, the risk of losing such an important unit must always be weighed.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Crisis Bodyguard	2	3	5	4	2	2	3	9	3+

UNIT TYPE: Jet Pack Infantry.

WARGEAR: Crisis battlesuit (pg 70).

SPECIAL RULES: Supporting Fire (pg 32), Very Bulky.

Sworn Protector: An Independent Character in a unit that contains at least one model with this special rule automatically passes Look Out, Sir attempts.

BATTLESUIT DEVELOPMENT

The advancement of the battlesuit has mirrored the rate at which the Tau have expanded across the galaxy. The earliest prototypes were field-tested during the early stages of the First Sphere Expansion, and although they were successful, the going was slow. The original fossil fuel-powered T-series was quickly replaced with the V-series, which used fission reaction, although radiation poisoning was still problematic. It wasn't until the end of that first period of rapid growth that battlesuit technology began to regularly appear within the Hunter Cadres. Not surprisingly, it was at these final stages that the Tau won their largest battles, as the elite formations began to refine their tactics to take advantage of what the armoured suits could do.

By the start of the Second Sphere Expansion, great strides had been made in battlesuit design, particularly in the areas of power sources and increased weapon loadouts. By the end of this period, the repulsor jump jets came into their own and the Hunter Cadres were conquering planets at a rate never before seen. At present, the battlesuit has never been more successful, and continual upgrades, different marks and variants, as well as new prototypes are continually being developed.

XV88 BROADSIDE TEAMS

The decision to combine the deadly rail-weapon technology of the Hammerhead Gunship with the most successful of Tau battlesuits – the XV8 Crisis suit – has produced the vaunted XV88 Broadside battlesuit. Designed to offer long-range support, the XV88 Broadside Teams have exceeded expectations, becoming mainstays of the Hunter Cadres and tank-killers of legendary proportions.

Powered by a particle accelerator, a Broadside's heavy rail rifle shot can penetrate the thickest plasteel bunkers, often doing so with enough force to punch an exit hole on the other side as well. While the weapon carried by the XV88 Broadside is not as massive as the railgun mounted on the Hammerhead, its range and destructive power are impressive nonetheless. In order to mount the twin-linked heavy rail rifle on a battlesuit, the Earth caste engineers had to modify the XV8 battlesuit. Due to the increased weight of its weapon system, the XV8's jet pack had to be removed, meaning the XV88 Broadside would trade its mobility and manoeuvrability in favour of increased weapon power and range. In prototype production, it was quickly noticed that the new battlesuit could not avoid incoming fire, so further protective armour was added. Later modifications added stabilisers and recoil units to the XV88 Broadside suit, and recent Earth caste tinkering has moved the heavy rail rifles from a shoulder mount to a hand-held position.

The XV88 Broadside Teams are deployed in groups of one to three and, unlike most Tau units, require a static firing position. Commanders have learned to deploy these long-ranged killers with care, for it takes valuable time for them to reposition, and while doing so, their main armament is far less accurate. The secondary weapon – a smart missile system – was chosen to make up for this shortcoming. Deadly in its own right, the smart missile system can fire off a barrage at any target within sensor range, even those in cover or hidden out of sight.

Those races that have faced the Tau in battle have grown to fear these heavily armoured battlesuits. During the Damocles Crusade, the XV88 Broadside was quickly identified by the Imperium as a major threat to armoured vehicles, whose soldiers learned to dread the whip-crack sound made by the hyper-sonic speed of a heavy rail rifle round; the distinct noise could only actually be heard after the shot had already hit home. In open terrain, like on Taros or the ice plains of Issenheim, a few Broadside Teams were sufficient to negate entire tank companies, quickly turning them into smoking wreckage. In the battles against the Tyranid Hive Fleet Gorgon, the XV88 Broadside Teams proved highly adaptive and effective in combating the larger alien creatures, especially after a refitting of their secondary weapons. The mounting of twin-linked plasma rifles in place of the twin-linked smart missile systems made the battlesuits even more effective when confronting the gargantuan bio-titans of the Tyranids.

Like all battlesuits, the XV88 Broadside is worn by a veteran, and can be upgraded with sophisticated support systems. A recent addition to the Broadside arsenal came in the Great War of Confederation, when the heavy rail rifle was replaced with a twin-linked high yield missile pod. During the initial setbacks, it was discovered that the mass of attacking Ork waves and the light nature of their vehicles meant the heavy rail rifle, although deadly, could not stem the overwhelming tide of attackers. The high yield missile pod sacrificed some range and hitting strength, but could lay down a greater barrage, and proved more than adequate to destroy the crude scrap-armoured Ork vehicles. Since then, many Commanders have included this variant in their cadres, either on its own or sometimes in a formation with more traditionally-armed Broadside.



	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Broadside Shas'ui	2	3	5	4	2	2	2	8	2+
Broadside Shas'vere	2	3	5	4	2	2	3	9	2+

UNIT TYPE: Infantry.

Broadside Shas'vere is Infantry (Character).

WARGEAR: Broadside battlesuit (pg 70), twin-linked heavy rail rifle (pg 66), twin-linked smart missile systems (pg 66).

SPECIAL RULES: Extremely Bulky, Supporting Fire (pg 32).

STEALTH TEAMS

Stealth Teams are special operations units that are the 'lone wolves' of the army, typically operating independently of the cadre. Theirs is a secretive way of war, as they infiltrate enemy lines, seeking vulnerable targets to destroy. In order to pass unseen into enemy territory, Stealth Teams use light-bending disruption technology embedded in their sleek battlesuits to camouflage themselves. Additional cloaking fields deaden sound and shield them from heat-detecting sensors, allowing them to penetrate deep into hostile regions before launching precisely timed ambushes. Suddenly appearing, as if stepping out from nowhere, a Stealth Team unleashes a hail of gunfire to cripple or eliminate their selected targets.

The key to Stealth Teams is the technology behind their XV15 and XV25 Stealth battlesuits. Only slightly more bulky than the armour worn by Fire Warriors, these 'Stealth suits' have integral stealth field generators that project from nodes situated about the body armour. They surround their bearer with a distortion effect that plays havoc with a full spectrum of light and confounds other detection devices, allowing warriors wearing such armour to move untracked, blending in with their surrounding environment. Because it is hard to focus on their location, a Stealth Team can hide to at least some degree even when standing in open territory. In areas of cover, such as forests or the rubble of an embattled city, they can effectively fade into the background, making themselves extremely difficult targets for enemies to mark out or lock on to effectively.

Built of the same dense nanocrystalline alloy as the larger XV8 Crisis suits, the Stealth suit is equipped with a powerful burst cannon as standard. For added firepower, some teams upgrade specific members to carry a fusion blaster, as these short-ranged weapons are better for engaging heavily armoured targets or vehicles. If a shas'vere is present, he can bring additional equipment, such as a marker light, drones or even a homing beacon to allow XV8 Crisis Teams to more accurately deploy. Some septs, most notably Tash'var, are known to employ Stealth Teams outfitted with Marker Drones. This is a tactic common against large Ork hordes, as the Stealth Teams use their burst cannons to thin the enemy numbers before painting them with markerlights, allowing the rest of the cadre to wipe them out. Once their ambush is sprung, Stealth Teams use their jet packs to make bounding leaps – moving either to acquire another target or to put obstacles in the way of any return fire.

Due to the nature of their covert role in battle, Stealth Teams enjoy a level of independence that is rare in Tau military operations. Observing comm-silence and unable to receive orders, Stealth Teams are typically left to make their own decisions. Those shas'ui who volunteer for such duty are seen as strange, an unpredictable lot who do not always follow convention – traits generally regarded with much suspicion in the well-regimented and highly structured culture of the Tau. Those who survive long enough to earn the title of shas'vere within the Stealth Teams are, without exception, noted as eccentrics, famous for their tactical innovations and daring raids deep behind enemy lines.



Many a foe of the Tau Empire has learned to be wary of the technologically blurred battlesuits that appear in their midst. During the Taros Campaign, roving Stealth Teams wreaked havoc within Imperial supply lines, sowing panic and confusion and sabotaging their advance before fading back into cover. Entire divisions of Imperial Guard were taken off the front lines in desperate attempts to hunt them down.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Stealth Shas'ui	2	3	4	3	1	2	2	8	3+
Stealth Shas'vere	2	3	4	3	1	2	3	9	3+

UNIT TYPE: Jet Pack Infantry.

Stealth Shas'vere is Jet Pack Infantry (Character).

WARGEAR: Stealth battlesuit (pg 70), burst cannon (pg 65).

SPECIAL RULES: Infiltrate, Supporting Fire (pg 32).

'LAUNCH AN AMBUSH NOT TO SLAY, BUT RATHER TO SEIZE THE INITIATIVE AND THEREBY WIN THE WAR.'

- COMMANDER PURETIDE

XV104 RIPTIDES

Since the start of the Third Sphere Expansion, rumours of a new, heavy class of battlesuit had spread throughout the ranks of the Fire caste. There was initially no appearance of this long-awaited latest prototype, but that changed during the expansion's first big showdown with the Imperium of Mankind on the Imperial planet of Agrellan. The human armies had amassed and dug in to protect their hive world, a situation that normally called for the Tau to concentrate on other, less fortified worlds. However, as the gateway planet to the whole of the coveted Dovar system, Agrellan was a keystone no invader could afford to bypass – its orbit blocked the best route through the largely impassable Damocles Gulf, and so it had to be taken.

The Imperial defensive positions surrounding each hive were formidable – heavy walls topped at regular intervals with ferroconcrete bunkers overlooked the open wastelands. These killing fields were strewn with impenetrable tank traps and gravity-mines. Should the Tau force their way through these perimeters, or simply airdrop within the fortified rings, they would find themselves within the claustrophobic and twisting streets of the great hive itself. There, specially prepared blockades and defensive citadels awaited the unwary, with infantry and armour garrisoned within to launch counter-attacks. It was a planet entirely given over to defending itself, its whole population geared either for war, or for war production.



To crack this formidable planet and open up the more vulnerable systems beyond, Shadowsun herself planned and launched the assault. Twenty Hunter Cadres would simultaneously strike key hive nodes, and at the vanguard of each strode the cutting edge of Earth caste weapons technology, and the pinnacle of their battlesuit development – the XV104 Riptide. At long last, the largest battlesuit prototype yet created by the Earth caste was unleashed.

The ground assaults began, perfectly coinciding with entire shoals of Sun Shark Bombers streaking overhead and numerous distracting attacks launched by forward-positioned Stealth and Pathfinder Teams. As the massed Hammerheads and skyborne Mantas rained fire on the enemy line, the Riptides at the fore came under attack. Enemy shells exploded harmlessly off their armoured shells as each Riptide brought its arsenal to bear upon the defenders.

The heavy burst cannon, the Riptide's standard main armament, raked the walls, stitching patterns of death that cut Guardsmen in two. Missiles, from the Riptide's secondary weapon systems and from its accompanying Shielded Missile Drones, blazed outwards, leaving contrails as they streaked into the enemy's ranks. To the rear, those Riptides outfitted with the ion accelerator showed off the range and hitting-power of their prototype weapons – destroying battle tanks and blowing chunks out of the reinforced bunkers.

Amidst the rain of incoming ordnance and the blossoming of explosions, the distinctive thrumming sound of Riptides overcharging their nova reactors could be heard. The very air crackled with electrical pulses due to the sheer energy generated by those indomitable power-packs. The massed guns of the Imperial Guard targeted the giant battlesuits, but to little avail. Near the gates of the Prime hive, a battery of incoming Deathstrike missiles momentarily lit the battlefield as they crashed into the Tau lines. For a long moment it seemed as if both sides paused; only an XV104 Riptide, protected by its nova shield, emerged from the flaming crater, black scorch marks marring its armour all it had to show for its brush with destruction.

Upon reaching the walls, the Riptides either engaged their jet packs to hurdle the impediment, or stepped through the breaches made by repeated blasts from their ion accelerators. With Fire Warriors advancing at their feet, the streets of every hive on Agrellan soon ran red with blood. Their defence and spirit broken, Guardsmen fled their posts in a complete rout. Only the lenient surrender terms offered by the Water caste saved an all-out massacre. Before the sun set, except for a few desperate pockets that would soon be wiped out, the planet belonged to the Tau, who would rename the planet Mu'gulath Bay. Later, it would serve as the foundation of a new sept.

So began the auspicious debut of the highly anticipated XV104 Riptide. A wonder of Earth caste engineering, it stands twice as tall as the XV8 Crisis suit, but its movements are more like those of its smaller cousins than the mechanical stiffness displayed by Imperial walkers with their

crude servo-motors. While the Riptide is huge and bears a number of weapon and support systems, it is still a battlesuit – worn and controlled by a lone warrior.

Production of the Riptide has proven slow – the materials for the dense nanocrystalline alloy armour are difficult to obtain and the sheer volume required ensures that the XV104 is a rare commodity. The honour of wearing such a mighty battlesuit is only given to those who have nobly served their Commanders as Crisis Battlesuit Bodyguards. To assist its wearer, the Riptide bears a sophisticated AI system, complete with a multi-tracker and numerous comm-links to keep the pilot patched in to the cadre's Commander. The Riptide is often supported by a pair of Shielded Missile Drones, a new drone configuration, each equipped with a missile pod and shield generator.



CONTINUAL DEVELOPMENT

The heavy battlesuit development initiative can be traced back to the massive Ork invasion of Vior'la. The Fire caste had long issued requests for a heavier class of battlesuit, one more capable of standing up to the increasingly powerful weaponry they were facing. Although crudely designed and built, the Tau could not help but be impressed with the amount of firepower that the primitive Ork Stompas and mountainous Gargants could produce. During the battles in the Damocles Gulf, the Fire caste faced the fully deployed might of the Imperium of Mankind, pitting their own weaponry against super-heavy tanks and Imperial Titans for the first time. For a race used to holding technical superiority, the sheer power of these aliens was eye-opening.

The Tau way of war stresses mobility over mass attacks and hit-and-run tactics over entrenched positions. A wise Commander is not daunted by foes that outnumber his own troops many times over, nor is he dismayed by the sheer size of the crude war machines their foes might deploy. Coordinated tactics, tight discipline and a well enacted battle plan can overcome such minor advantages. However, even Commander Puretide, the ultimate master of the balanced attack, freely admitted that the creation of a heavier class of battlesuits, with upgraded size and armour, would better enable cadres to withstand the prodigious firepower that was regularly directed at them.

Yet despite such worthy requests, all Earth caste attempts resulted in failure. Earlier prototypes were ponderous machines, not fit to enact the tactics of the Code of Fire, or they subjected their wearer (or the planet on which he stood) to risks beyond measure. What finally made the XV104 possible was the nova reactor, an experimental power-pack that fuses dark matter, producing energy on scales closer to small stars than conventional engines. Such devices have been used to empower the mighty fleets of the Air caste, but until recently, could not be reduced to a suitable size. Although still in the prototype stage, the nova reactor has proven largely stable, despite some problems in safely releasing the vast energies it produces.

The Riptide's higher functions can draw upon this almost unlimited source of power, but not without some risk. While attempting to utilise its shield, boost its jet pack or charge any of its weapons, the XV104 Riptide can suffer dangerous power vents capable of wounding or even killing its pilot.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Riptide Shas'vere	2	3	6	6	5	2	3	9	2+

UNIT TYPE: Jet Pack Monstrous Creature.

WARGEAR: Riptide battlesuit (pg 70), heavy burst cannon (pg 65), twin-linked smart missile systems (pg 66), riptide shield generator (pg 69).

SPECIAL RULES: Supporting Fire (pg 32).

Nova Reactor: You must declare if the pilot is going to attempt to use the reactor at the start of each of his Movement phases. If he chooses to do so, roll a D6. On the roll of a 1 or a 2, something has gone wrong – the Riptide Shas'vere suffers a single Wound with no saves of any kind allowed and the attempt fails. On any other roll, the attempt is successful, and you can choose one of the abilities listed below for the Riptide Shas'vere to have (until the start of its next Movement phase).

Action	Effect
<i>Nova Shield</i>	This grants the Riptide Shas'vere a 3+ invulnerable save.
<i>Boost</i>	The Riptide Shas'vere rolls 4D6 for its Thrust Move in the Assault phase.
<i>Ripple Fire</i>	The Riptide Shas'vere can fire its twin-linked fusion blaster, its twin-linked plasma rifle, or its twin-linked smart missile system twice this turn. Even though these weapons are fired twice, each still only counts as firing one weapon.
<i>Nova-charge</i>	The Riptide Shas'vere's ion accelerator or heavy burst cannon can fire using its nova-charge profile.

UPGRADES

The Shielded Missile Drone uses its cohesive energy field to absorb incoming shots, better allowing the Riptide to acquire and destroy enemy targets.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Shielded Missile Drone	2	2	4	6	1	4	1	7	4+

UNIT TYPE: Jet Pack Infantry (Drone).

WARGEAR: Missile pod (pg 66), shield generator (pg 69).

SPECIAL RULES: Supporting Fire (pg 32).

SNIPER DRONE TEAMS

Ensnconced in cover far from the front lines of battle, a Firesight Marksman scans the battlefield, using advanced optical sights to select prime targets. Above him float the rest of his team – a group of Sniper Drones, each of them equipped with an underslung longshot pulse rifle. Sniper Drone Teams are a deadly addition to any cadre as they are adept at picking off enemy leaders or eliminating key infantrymen, such as those carrying heavy weapons.

Although the Sniper Drones are equipped with impressive artificial intelligence, it is the Firesight Marksman, a shas'la, who is the brains behind the operation. He is masked by a small stealth field generator, meaning that he can secret himself into dense terrain where he will blend in, minimising the threat of return fire. The marksman is equipped with a drone controller, with which he commands his deadly charges, seeking out the most vulnerable quarry. Sniper Drones are modified from the standard drones, for they carry a longshot pulse rifle and stabilising fins, as well as their own mini-stealth field generators.

The longshot pulse rifle is a lethal weapon that can send its plasma pulse over a great distance. A well-placed shot is capable of taking out any target, and there are many accounts of Sniper Drone Teams single-handedly throwing enemy forces into disarray with their ability to rain down sniper fire from long

range. When fighting against the humans attempting raids in the Perdus Rift, a lone Sniper Drone Team claimed an entire Terminator squad – each member shot directly through the less armoured eye lenses of their helmets.

Many Commanders station Sniper Drone Teams behind their own gunlines, as this affords extra protection for Fire Warrior or XV88 Broadside Teams. Others use Sniper Drone Teams to dominate open territory – deploying them in positions that overlook swathes of the battlefield, often covering the approach towards intervening friendly units. Thanks to their anti-gravitic jets, the Sniper Drones can move, momentarily steady themselves, shoot at their quarry, and then move back behind cover, making them very hard to target with ranged weapons. This particular technique was used to perfection in the battle against Hive Fleet Gorgon on Ke'lshan, with the threat of fire from massed banks of Sniper Drones causing even the largest Tyranid monstrosities to cease their headlong charges and instead attempt to move through cover.

Firesight Marksmen are equipped with a pulse pistol, in case a foe attempts to close with them, and more importantly, a markerlight. This is used to support nearby comrades or to launch seeker missiles, although some marksmen prefer to keep themselves out of the line of fire, exposing only their drones to incoming shots. A marksman can command up to nine Sniper Drones, but when fielding that many, it is common to add additional controllers. Should all marksmen on the team be slain, the Sniper Drones have enough AI to continue the fight, and Earth caste engineers have been amazed to arrive upon a battlefield many hours after its conclusion to find the Sniper Drones still hovering on duty – their sniping rifles still turning, looking for new targets.



	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Firesight Marksman	2	5	3	3	1	2	1	7	4+
Sniper Drone	2	2	3	4	1	4	1	7	4+

UNIT TYPE: Infantry.

Sniper Drone is **Jet Pack Infantry (Drone)**.

WARGEAR:

Firesight Marksman: Combat armour (pg 70), pulse pistol (pg 66), drone controller (pg 68), markerlight (pg 68).

Sniper Drone: Longshot pulse rifle (pg 66).

SPECIAL RULES: Stealth, Supporting Fire (pg 32).

'THOSE WITH SUPERIOR REACH CAN DICTATE THE TERMS OF BATTLE AND IMPOSE THEIR WILL UPON THEIR FDE. REMEMBER, THE FIRST STEP ON THE PATH TO VICTORY IS OFTEN THE MOST IMPORTANT.'

— COMMANDER PURETIDE

PIRANHAS

The Piranha is a lightly armoured skimmer – a mobile weapons platform that is capable of great speed and manoeuvrability. Using its jet-thrusters and anti-gravitic engine, the Piranha glides over a planet's surface, its twin pilots well able to hug the terrain and make the best use of any cover. Along with a nose-mounted main armament, the Piranha carries two drones – either retained on the vehicle to add firepower, or detached into AI mode to perform some other mission.

On the battlefield, Piranhas often seem to be everywhere at once – hurtling over friendly troops to counter-attack approaching infantry, racing along the flanks to launch devastating enfilades at enemy armour, or streaking from behind cover to destroy vulnerable foes. After so many training drills that stress using coordinated attacks and mutual fire support, Fire Warriors are well accustomed to the thrum of a Piranha soaring just over their heads, and they no longer turn to follow the sudden swoosh of air as they streak past.



Piranhas are used in a wide array of capacities, and formations range in size from lone vehicles to a team of up to five working in conjunction. The larger schools of these deadly skimmers can use their burst cannons to annihilate enemy infantry units, while smaller formations are ideal for eradicating scouts or countering enemy teleporters. Lone Piranhas that are equipped with the deadly fusion blaster are proficient hunters of enemy tanks. Using its speed, the skimmer will attempt to manoeuvre so as to target tanks in their more vulnerable side and rear armour. During an attack run, Piranhas are a blur of motion, and the crew are more likely to trust their speed and jinking ability over any amount of armour.

Piranhas have the ability to bring firepower quickly to wherever it is needed, but they are even more dangerous when working in conjunction with Pathfinder teams. Using markerlights, the Pathfinders often set up Piranha runs, ensuring that the skimmers' volley of fire is as devastating as possible. In return, Pathfinders that find themselves in danger of being overrun request quick strikes by Piranha Teams to help wipe out approaching enemies or, at least, buy time for the Pathfinders to reposition.

┌ Armour ┐					
BS	F	S	R	HP	
Piranha	3	11	10	10	2

UNIT TYPE: Vehicle (Fast, Open-topped, Skimmer).

WARGEAR: Burst cannon (pg 65), two Gun Drones (pg 33).



HERO OF THE EMPIRE

The most famous Piranha pilot was Ghovah, from Vior'la Sept, who claimed over 1,000 kills during his service fighting for the Tau Empire. His most famous victory, however, occurred after his retirement from the frontiers to a training position. An Ork invasion thrust Ghovah back into battle when the greenskins attacked Vior'la's largest moon. Only Ghovah's half-trained Piranha cadre stood between the mechanised greenskin army and the destruction of the vital food-producing moon base.

With Ghovah leading the way, the Piranha squadrons darted in interweaving patterns to attack the columns of ramshackle Ork vehicles. Piranhas with burst cannons concentrated on the lightly armoured bikes and Trukk transports, while the fusion blaster-equipped skimmers dealt with the heavily plated battlewagons and tanks. The Orks broke off their drive towards the Earth caste agri-centres and attempted to engage Ghovah's Piranha teams. In the ensuing battles, the agile skimmers feinted and fled, setting the Orks up for repeated counter-attacks. The greenskins finally broke when, even while losing control of his crippled Piranha, the elder Tau steered his vehicle straight into the Warboss' battlewagon, causing it to erupt in flames. Ghovah's unstinting skill and sacrifice were noted and he was, posthumously, named a hero of the Empire.

SUN SHARK BOMBERS

Due to their unique fighting tendencies and their highly mobile nature, Hunter Cadres do not use artillery in the conventional sense that most armies do. Instead, in association with the Air caste, they have developed the Sun Shark Bomber – a sleek atmospheric aircraft that is capable of sweeping down from the skies and blasting ground targets with its potent payload.

Sun Shark Bombers come equipped with a pulse bomb generator, which produces a ball of deadly plasma beneath the craft. At the pilot's command, the pulsed induction field propels the glaring energy ball towards targets on the battlefield below. Sizzling the air around it, the pulse bomb explodes on the ground with an incandescent fury, spreading destruction over a wide radius. A shoal of Sun Shark Bombers flying in tight formation can blast apart even the most surging of Ork Waaaghs! with a single flyover.

An extremely effective weapon, once fired, the pulse bomb generator immediately begins to form another destructive charge. Sometimes, however, a persistent glitch from its prototype days results in a power failure, meaning the Sun Shark cannot drop further bombs until the engineers can reconfigure the micro power plant. With this in mind, the Sun Shark has also been equipped with several other weapons, including a pair of seeker missiles. Many a desperate

Pathfinder or Fire Warrior Team owe their continued existence to those airborne seeker missiles, which they call in using their markerlights. Their ability to strike enemy vehicles or make short work of armoured infantry with the help of nearby air support greatly increases their chances for survival. The Sun Shark also bears a tail-mounted missile pod, which can be upgraded to a twin-linked version, as well as a nose-mounted networked markerlight to line up bombing runs.

To ensure the Sun Shark survives long enough to deliver its bombing run, the vehicle is equipped with a pair of wing mounted Interceptor Drones. Each armed with a powerful twin-linked ion rifle, Interceptor Drones can either stay attached to the Sun Shark, where they act like turret-mounted weapons, or, they can detach from the flyer and serve as an escort.

When disembarking from the Sun Shark Bomber, the Interceptor Drones position themselves to intervene between the bomber and any oncoming fighters. They also have the ability to boost their jets, giving them a rare burst of speed, that allows Interceptor Drones to better position themselves to lock onto aerial targets and attempt to blast them out of the sky. Few enemy flyers are capable of withstanding the vaporising effects of the ion rifle, and some Interceptor Drones have racked up impressive kill totals; a source of bragging rights for the Sun Shark's Air caste pilots, if not for the AI powered drones themselves.



		[Armour]											
		BS	F	S	R	HP							
Sun Shark Bomber		3	11	10	10	3							
		WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv			
Interceptor Drone		2	2	3	4	1	4	1	7	4+			

UNIT TYPE: Vehicle (Flyer).

Interceptor Drones are Jet Pack Infantry (Drone).

WARGEAR:

Sun Shark Bomber: Pulse bomb generator (pg 69), missile pod(pg 66), networked markerlight (pg 69), two seeker missiles (pg 66).

Interceptor Drone: Twin-linked ion rifle (pg 66).

SPECIAL RULES (Interceptor Drones): Interceptor, Skyfire, Supporting Fire (pg 32).

Afterburners: Interceptor Drones can Turbo-boost as if they were Jetbikes (see the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook).

High Velocity Deployment: Interceptor Drones can disembark at any point during the Sun Shark's move (even though models cannot normally disembark from Zooming Flyers). Note that, unlike other Transports, a Sun Shark Bomber that moves before its Interceptor Drones disembark can continue its move immediately after they have disembarked.

RAZORSHARK STRIKE FIGHTERS

To the Fire Warriors forming the front ranks of a firing line, there are few sights more gratifying than seeing a Razorshark Strike Fighter swoop out of the cloud cover and streak over enemy formations. Built along a design pattern modified from the Sun Shark Bomber, the Razorshark forgoes the Interceptor Drone in favour of additional manoeuvring thrusters, and it trades the pulse bomb generator for a fearsome quad ion turret. A formidable weapon, the quad ion turret is ideal for turning light vehicles into twisted wrecks. Although it makes the weapon slightly unstable, when fired on its overcharged mode, the quad ion turret can produce an enormous blast radius that consumes entire squads with a single shot.

During the Tyranid invasion on the sept world of Ke'lsan, the aliens quickly grew wary of the dominating Tau air attacks. High in the stratosphere, the super-heavy Manta blasted away the flying terrors, while just above the planet's surface swept the Sun Shark Bombers, their pulse bombs breaking up the swarming Hormagaunt attacks. While the Tau's entire aerial arsenal played a part, it was the Razorshark Strike Fighters that took the highest toll on their foe. Streaking back and forth over the battlefield, the Razorsharks relentlessly targeted the Tyranid Warriors, the beams from their quad ion turrets easily penetrating the Tyranids' thick, chitinous armour. After one of the Razorshark's attack runs, entire squads of the elite alien warriors would be left in ruin, their half-melted bodies continuing to sizzle long after their deaths. A fast moving craft, the Razorshark was able to seek out and destroy the brains of the invasion – whether they attempted to lurk far behind the front lines, or chose to surround themselves with intervening lesser creatures, the Razorshark was manoeuvrable enough to hunt them down. When infiltrators such as Lictors or Ravens emerged to threaten the Fire Warriors, the Razorsharks could swiftly fly back to target the beasts, minimising both the harm and the distraction of such attacks.

The Razorshark Strike Fighter can engage enemy flyers, but the craft was purpose-built as a ground support attack craft; a role in which it excels. Its success is evident from the craft's ever-growing popularity with the Fire Warriors that it flies above. In addition to its main armament, each Razorshark is loaded out with a nose-mounted burst cannon. For further support, it also carries two seeker missiles. These can be auto-fired by the Razorshark's Air caste pilot himself, but are more effective when launched by a ground unit that has painted its target with a markerlight.



AERIAL CONTROL

The Tau doctrine of war places great importance upon dominating the airways above any battlefield they deploy to. It is their commonly held belief that controlling the skies is the first step in winning the engagement. By making the elimination of enemy flyers a priority, ground troops are allowed to concentrate on their targets without having to concern themselves with any threat from above. This strategy thereby enables the Tau to make full use of their mobile ground support assets.

With no enemy flyers to worry about, the Sun Shark shoals are better able to line up their devastating bombing runs while Razorsharks fly circles around enemy infantry or armour, using the range and potent hitting power of their quad ion weapons to pick off foes from beyond the range of most return fire.

With full aerial supremacy, the Tau are free to concentrate their flexible firepower when and how they need to – efficiently isolating and destroying enemy assets one by one. In the hands of an experienced Commander, the fine-tuned coordination of air attacks in the skies above the battlefield can make a Hunter Cadre very adaptable and extremely lethal.

Armour

BS F S R HP

Razorshark Strike Fighter 3 11 10 10 3

UNIT TYPE: Vehicle (Flyer).

WARGEAR: Burst cannon (pg 65), quad ion turret (pg 66), two seeker missiles (pg 66).

HAMMERHEAD GUNSHIPS

Like a hungry predator on the prowl, the Hammerhead Gunship is a menacing sight. It skims over a planet's surface with its massive turret-mounted gun swivelling back and forth to track potential targets. The Hammerhead Gunship is the main battle tank of the Tau, and all enemies who have encountered it quickly grow to respect, if not outright fear, the might of its main armament – the dreaded railgun.

The railgun is a linear accelerator that uses super-conductive electrodes to project a solid shot at hypersonic speeds. The vast kinetic energy generated by the round on impact has devastating effects, even at long ranges. The Hammerhead can also carry sophisticated submunitions – a shot full of smaller projectiles used for suppressive area fire against soft targets. For close ranged protection, the Hammerhead carries a pair of Gun Drones, although at need, these can be switched to full AI mode and detached from the tank to carry out their own mission.

Some Hammerheads do not carry a railgun as their main weapon, but instead use the ion cannon – a unique Tau innovation that shoots an ionic beam, which explodes upon contact with its target. Ideal for use against light vehicles and heavily armoured infantry, the ion cannon can also be overcharged; while this risks a dangerous overload, it results in a larger blast capable of destroying even more targets.

It is common to find at least a few Hammerheads deployed in support of Fire Warrior teams. Although well armoured, the Hammerhead is most often kept at a distance to take advantage of the superior range of its weapons. There are many accounts of single Hammerheads demolishing enemy armour with almost contemptuous ease.



During the Damocles Crusade, the Hammerhead gained a particularly fearsome reputation amongst the Imperial Guard. Entire armoured companies were destroyed before they could close with the Tau battle lines, and whole offensives were transformed into fields of wreckage by the formidable Hammerhead gunship. Not to be denied their advance, the humans massed their remaining armour and sent them all against the Tau line, seeking to overwhelm them with sheer numbers. But the Tau are veteran Ork-fighters, and they were well-accustomed to such tactics; the Imperial tanks were met by well-placed Armoured Interdiction Cadres – formations of Hammerheads and Sky Rays. Although outnumbered at least five to one, the superior range and armour penetrating ability of the Hammerhead – along with its ability to quickly reposition into cover or advance into a better firing position – more than made up the difference. By the campaign's end, the Imperial Guard tank regiments were utterly demoralised as they grimly calculated their low odds of survival; they would never leave cover without first thoroughly scanning the horizon for the Hammerhead's distinctive shape.

Although the Hammerhead Gunship performs well in tank duels, the combined arms approach of the Tau requires much more from their main battle tank than just anti-armour capability. It was the legendary Commander Puretide who said 'Even the most rampant horde attack can be broken through application of firepower' and the submunitions blasts of the railgun can rip enough bloody gaps in charging formations to halt an incoming Waaagh! or smash an entire wave of lesser Tyranids. Fire Warrior and Pathfinder teams often work closely with Hammerheads, mutually supporting each other and frequently using markerlights to guide the gunships' powerful shots towards priority targets.

└ Armour ┐

	BS	F	S	R	HP
Hammerhead Gunship	4	13	12	10	3

UNIT TYPE: Vehicle (Tank, Skimmer).

WARGEAR: Railgun with solid shot (pg 66), two Gun Drones (pg 33).



SKY RAY GUNSHIPS

The Sky Ray Missile Defence Gunship is a specialised variant of the Hammerhead that replaces its turret gun with an array of deadly seeker missiles. Originally designed to neutralise enemy aircraft, the Sky Ray has also proven its value in a combined arms approach. The Sky Ray's missiles can be fired directly by the vehicle, or they may be launched by an independent ground operator, aimed at any target lit by a markerlight. In this way, Pathfinders or Fire Warriors – teams that don't carry their own heavy weaponry – can still have instant access to the Sky Ray's potent seeker missiles, firing them remotely through the network.

On the battlefield, a Sky Ray is a grav-tank that glides behind the front lines, using its twin markerlights to sweep the horizon – seeking to find and lock-on to either ground or airborne targets. Should enemy targets be acquired, the crew can launch a seeker missile, a deadly rocket that streaks away faster than the eye can follow. If the target is light infantry, not worth one of the limited seeker missiles, the Sky Ray will instead use its pair of markerlights to light up the foe – making them easier prey for the guns of nearby Fire Warriors. The crew of the Sky Ray rely heavily on their interactions with the forward infantry teams and are in constant contact with them, coordinating fire and determining the viability of targets.



The Sky Ray was first developed and deployed towards the end of the Damocles Crusade, and served as a counter to the Imperium's air power. Thanks to its velocity tracker, the Sky Ray could lock its missiles onto any target it could see – including the fast moving flyers of the Imperial Navy. The seeker missiles that they carry are so fast that many enemy pilots are hit and downed before they can even take evasive manoeuvres. During the Taros Campaign, enemy pilots dubbed the vehicle the 'sting ray' or 'stinger' and they came to value confirmed Sky Ray kills above all others. During the Great War of Confederation, so many Ork bombers were lost due to the Sky Ray barriers positioned around Tau cities that even the daredevil Ork pilots soon refused to enter what they termed 'deff alley'. Yet the Sky Ray is not only deadly to flyers, as many enemy tanks have learned. Even enemy commanders have found themselves suddenly lit with markerlights and then targeted by seeker missiles. Several notable Space Marine heroes were thusly obliterated during their recent offensives in the Zeist sector.

For its secondary weapon system, the Sky Ray is usually equipped with a pair of Gun Drones. For increased firepower, these Gun Drones can be replaced with a twin-linked burst cannon or a twin-linked smart missile system (SMS). Many Sky Ray crew prefer the SMS as it provides a high degree of close-ranged protection, and its self-guided missiles allow the Sky Ray to make maximum use of cover, sometimes never exposing itself to return fire.

For all their effectiveness, Sky Rays are rarely encountered in large numbers. Generally, a single vehicle is attached to a Hunter Cadre or deployed near vulnerable locations such as airbases or power generators. With Pathfinders far out front, the Sky Ray is typically positioned behind the main battle line of Fire Warriors. In this way, it provides an effective air defence while still being able to aid the infantry against ground targets. It is not unusual to find a Sky Ray as support for an Armoured Interdiction Cadre, although some septs prefer to field impressive Sky Shields – a trio of Sky Rays whose interlocking markerlights and extensive arsenal of missiles provides an umbrella of protection to the ground forces below.

		[Armour]				
		BS	F	S	R	HP
Skyray Gunship		4	13	12	10	3

UNIT TYPE: Vehicle (Tank, Skimmer).

WARGEAR: Six seeker missiles (pg 66), two Gun Drones (pg 33), two networked markerlights (pg 69), velocity tracker (pg 69).



KROOT CARNIVORE SQUADS

The Kroot are a prolific and war-like alien race that can be found scattered across the galaxy, but are most concentrated on the Eastern Fringe. Although they are a wandering and feral race, their capital and birthworld is Pech – and it is to this planet that the Kroot all eventually return, in a strange sort of galactic migration or pilgrimage. Since the Second Sphere Expansion, Pech has found itself within the borders of the Tau Empire and, indeed, the Kroot there have wholly pledged their allegiance to the Tau Empire. Of all the different xenos species integrated into the Tau Empire, the Kroot are by far the most common auxiliaries serving alongside the Fire caste, with many billions of their kind armed for war and assigned to the Hunter Cadres of nearly every sept in the Empire.

Given free reign of the battlefield, the Kroot silently and stealthily creep into flanking positions, burying themselves deep in any forested groves or overgrown thickets they can find. There, unseen, they carefully level their long rifles, slowly taking aim and waiting for the perfect moment to launch their ambush. When the time is right, and a vulnerable target presents itself, they unleash a devastating volley of fire. Despite their feral appearance, the Kroot show an uncanny ability to discern and pick off key targets amongst their foes – often sniping officers or enemy troopers with heavy weapons or communications gear. Only

when the foe is whittled down to size and disorganised do the Kroot emerge from their cover, closing the distance between themselves and their quarry with their strange, bounding gait. What happens when the Kroot burst forth and descend upon such hapless victims is vicious, visceral and terribly messy. It is an attack technique learned in the lush jungles and fetid swamps of their homeworld, Pech, and they have adapted similar tactics for wherever their far travels have taken them.

The savage ways and features of the Kroot offer a stark contrast to the Fire Warriors whom they fight beside. Kroot dress only in skins, supplemented with a few sparse pieces of metal plate crudely stitched into place, appearing especially primitive next to the form-fitting body armour used by the Tau. Where the Fire Warriors strive for a uniformity of equipment and coordinated movements honed by precise military drill, the Kroot are notoriously ragtag – adorned with a mix of bones and simple hand-created fetishes. Many even bear hunks of flesh, fodder ripped from the deceased to be consumed at a later time.

The Kroot's appetite is their most dominating characteristic, for the aliens are so voracious that they are known to stoop mid-battle to take a bite out of one of the fallen, gulping down fleshy chunks before returning to action. This disquieting habit



alone is enough to distance them from their erstwhile allies; however, the Kroot's natural instincts, amazing self-reliance no matter their environment and matchless fieldcraft are so sought after by the Tau that such barbaric inadequacies are largely overlooked. That is, of course, so long as their in-battle feasting steers clear of friendly forces – the bodies of both their own kind and of the Tau are forfeit. The grim truth of the matter, however, is that the carnivorous Kroot care not from where their next meal comes from, provided that it comes frequently. Although they don't understand the squeamishness of their allies, the Kroot have learned that such instincts must be curbed, at least while in the direct presence of any Tau.

The Kroot's numbers and their sheer eagerness to fight have made them the single most valuable alien allies in the growing Tau Empire. In an effort to make their auxiliaries more efficient, the Tau have even upgraded the standard Kroot weapons. The Kroot have always favoured a long, bladed rifle that also serves as a close combat staff. This was originally little more than a crude slug-throwing weapon, but thanks to Tau technology, modifications now allow the rifles to fire a charged particle similar to that unleashed by the pulse weapons employed by Fire Warriors. The Tau have even augmented some of the Kroot rifles to fire using different ballistic settings, so those Kroot so armed can switch from the standard pulse fire to a sniping mode, as befits their alien way of fighting. However, despite the Kroot's overt show of loyalty and the fact that Pech is entirely integrated into the Tau Empire, not all Kroot fight for the Tau. They are notorious mercenaries and can be found across the vastness of space fighting alongside Eldar pirates, Humans and even the despicable Hrud.

KROOT SUB-SPECIES

When the Kroot go to war, they often bring with them many of the strange subspecies of Kroot-like beings that are found near any sizable gathering of the aliens. This makes the organisation of a Carnivore Squad an anarchic affair. The force is always centred around Kroot warriors, but is often joined by other divergent creatures of their ilk. Kroot Hounds, while notoriously bad-tempered, are valued additions, for they add to the formation's tracking and fighting ability. Kroot Hounds can track quarry with their incredibly keen senses, while in combat, the agile creatures dart around their handlers, using their beak-like mouths to rip at the vulnerable underbellies of their prey. The Kroot have even trained the beasts to go after the weaker joints of power armour. The violent Kroot Hounds are most deadly, however, in pursuit – for the Kroot themselves rarely chase a beaten enemy. Instead, they release their bloodthirsty pack to viciously pull down any they can catch.

Another beast commonly found among Kroot is the lumbering Krootox, a hulking creature whose broad back serves as a mobile weapon platform. A heavy cannon-like gun is strapped to the Krootox and a Kroot warrior climbs aboard its mighty haunches to operate the weapon. Although not aggressive as a rule, the Krootox will fight ferociously to defend its comrades, who the beast sees as herd brothers.

Exactly what or how these creatures develop has been a matter of intense speculation, largely centred around the

Kroot's leaders, mysterious commanders called Shapers. It is believed that Kroot can absorb some of the traits of other creatures when they consume their flesh. Thus, if the Kroot on a planet feast exclusively on a certain type of prey over a period of time, they themselves will begin to exhibit the same kinds of qualities in their physiology. For example, Kroot that feed on the gorilloid Primapes will themselves amass great corded muscles.

Kroot Carnivore Squads are highly valued amongst all Tau cadres, although even the most battle-experienced Tau look away when the Kroot are overcome by their predilection for eating the raw flesh of their vanquished foes. In the ongoing expansions, the Kroot are afforded virtually the same level of respect as are the Tau. Fire Warrior Commanders, and even Ethereals themselves, always ensure that the Kroot's martial prowess is well rewarded, although all secretly hope that one day the prolonged exposure to the Tau's sensibilities and their superior culture will eventually purge the feral race's more distasteful habits.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Kroot	4	3	3	3	1	3	1	7	6+
Shaper	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	8	6+
Krootox Rider	4	3	6	3	2	3	2	7	6+
Kroot Hound	4	0	3	3	1	5	2	6	-

UNIT TYPE: Infantry. Shaper is Infantry (Character).

Kroot Hounds are Beasts.

WARGEAR:

Kroot and Shaper: Kroot armour (pg 70),

Kroot rifle with pulse rounds (pg 66),

Krootox Rider: Kroot armour (pg 70), Kroot gun (pg 66).

SPECIAL RULES: Acute Senses (Kroot Hounds only), Bulky (Krootox Rider only), Infiltrate, Move Through Cover, Stealth (Forests).

FARSPREAD MERCENARIES

The Kroot originated from Pech, an arboreal world located to the galactic northwest of the Tau Empire. Once, Pech was filled with a variety of animal life, although it has been largely hunted to extinction and now the planet supports primarily Kroot and their many offshoot biological cousins. The Kroot first left Pech when they were recruited as mercenaries by other space-faring races and, since then, have spread widely. No matter how far they travel across the vastness of space, all of Krootkind consider Pech their home and will instinctively seek to travel there at least once in their lifetimes.

To this day, the Kroot maintain no deeply held prejudices against any other race and give little or no thought to who they fight, so long as they are well compensated. Only with the Tau have they formed any bond of loyalty that goes beyond a strictly mercenary one, although whether this is due to debt of honour, a belief in the Greater Good or some other nefarious reason, is unknown.

VESPID STINGWINGS

Once heard, the high-pitched hum of Vespids wings is an unforgettable noise, though few hear it and live to tell the tale; the sound is usually picked out just moments before the ominous lightning-crackle report of the neutron blaster releases its deadly charge. Vespids are a flying insectoid race that have joined the Tau Empire; their mobile units – known as Stingwings – fight as auxiliaries alongside the warriors of the Fire caste.

It is a strange to see the Vespids and the Tau allied together, for at first glance, they seem so radically different. The Vespids appear to hover and bob effortlessly in mid-air, their chitinous wings moving so quickly they are seen only as a blur. Although Tau of the Air caste once bore wings, they now rely upon technology to soar. Like the Fire Warriors, the Vespids are covered in segmented plate armour, but their protection is no engineering marvel, but rather a hardened exoskeleton. Where the Fire Warriors use a sophisticated comm-sensor attached to their helmets to supply an array of data, the Vespids rely on natural means: a pair of remarkably sensitive antennae constantly collecting information about their surroundings. Despite their obvious differences, both races are highly deferential to their leaders, obeying even their suggestions as if they were strict orders. While the Tau and Vespids races now share a tight relationship, such was not always the case.



When the Water caste first encountered the Vespids, they had many difficulties – the insectoid mindset seemed too radically different to grasp or reason with. However, at the instruction of the Ethereals, the Earth caste supplied a communication interface device that facilitated a much greater degree of understanding between the two races. More sophisticated versions were soon developed, including the communication-helms worn by the Vespids Strain Leaders, and these cleared the way for integration into the growing Tau Empire. Uniquely, at the time, the Vespids welcomed their new position in the Empire and bowed before the pre-eminence of the Ethereals. The Vespids readily agreed to exchange auxiliary troops and regular harvests of the highly coveted crystals of the planet Vespids, for technological support and weapons upgrades. There have been whispers alluding to a hidden connection between the Vespids' calm acceptance of annexation and the interface helms given to their leaders, though no evidence to support such claims has ever been forthcoming.

The Vespids Stingwings are of great use in warfare due to their speed, their ability to navigate over rough terrain and the lethal nature of their weapons. The armament carried by the Stingwings is unique to Vespids. Mounted at the end of each gun's barrel is a highly energetic and unstable crystal harvested from the lowest levels of the Vespids' homeworld. The Tau have provided the Stingwings with the technology to mount these crystals on advanced neutron containment and projection systems, making them deadly weapons – able to pass straight through enemy armour to damage flesh or fry inner circuitry. The weapons, however, only function in the hands of a Vespids, for the constant, ultrasonic tone emitted by the vibrations of their wings perfectly modulates the energies contained within the crystals.

In battle, the Stingwings are most often integrated into fast-moving, mobile cadres. There, the Vespids serve as flying reconnaissance, complementing the ground-based scouts of the Pathfinder Teams. Some Commanders also use Stingwings to attack alongside their Crisis Teams, for the winged insectoids have the speed and manoeuvrability to keep up with agile Tau jet packs. It is a great compliment that all five castes wholly welcome the Vespids Stingwings, a level of acceptance that has not yet been paid to the more mercenary Kroot of Pech.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Vespids Stingwing	3	3	3	4	1	6	1	6	4+
Vespids Strain Leader	3	3	3	4	1	6	2	9	4+

UNIT TYPE: Jump Infantry.

Vespids Strain Leader is **Jump Infantry (Character)**.

WARGEAR: Combat armour (pg 70), neutron blaster (pg 66).

SPECIAL RULES: Fleet, Hit & Run, Move Through Cover, Stealth (Ruins).

DRONE SQUADRONS

Tau make extensive use of machine-intelligences called drones and the variant most commonly seen fighting alongside the Fire caste is known as the Gun Drone. Although small and somewhat innocuous, those foes that underestimate the Gun Drones often pay for such a costly mistake with their lives. Using anti-gravitic motors and jet-thrusters, Gun Drones hover over the landscape, rotating back and forth as their sensor vane transmits vital information about their surroundings. Should an enemy be encountered, the Gun Drones accelerate to greater speed – skimming quickly into firing position, their underslung twin-linked pulse carbines swivelling to unload their firepower upon the acquired target.

The sleek Gun Drone is well armoured, highly mobile and its programming can cope with any number of battlefield roles. When grouped into a squadron, Gun Drones can produce a withering fusillade of fire – a hailstorm of deadly plasma bursts to support Fire Warriors and bolster defence gunlines. Because of their speed and mobility, some Commanders choose to send Gun Drone Squadrons on seek and destroy missions, unleashing the disk-shaped killing machines to advance along a flank, overwhelming enemy scout patrols or even light vehicles. As their jet-thrusters allow them to slow their descent, it is possible to deploy a Gun Drone Squadron by Manta or Orca super-heavy dropships – literally dropping the drones above the battlefield. The sudden appearance of a unit of Gun Drones, appearing from nowhere with twin-linked pulse carbines blazing, can disrupt the best-laid enemy plans and force them to reposition valuable assets.

A remarkable feat of Earth caste engineering, the artificial intelligence of drones increases when they are networked together into squadrons, greatly ramping up their processing speed and ability for independent action. Such squadrons have no need for Tau controllers and are capable of impressive tactical feats. It is common to see Gun Drone Squadrons using their ability to shoot and then moving back to cover to tie up and antagonise enemy units. Other Gun Drone Squadrons stalk enemy vehicles, using their mobility to swing around and target the more vulnerable side or rear armour. Some Gun Drones in a squadron can be upgraded to carry a markerlight or possibly a shield generator. In very rare instances, entire squadrons have been so altered – such as the Shield Drone barrier used with some success in the great tank duels of the Almo'th plains, or Commander Shadowsun's barrage of markerlights that helped wipe out the Ork infantry ensconced in the ruins of the Cha'nel colony.

So deeply do the Tau believe in the Greater Good, that even their drones are programmed with self-preservation protocols – in the face of what the AI deems to be hopeless odds, the drones will attempt to escape. While, at need, Drone Squadrons might be used in high-risk missions or purposefully moved to block enemy paths towards the Fire Warriors, the Tau do not consider drones to be disposable and the drone artificial intelligence will analyse every possibility in order to ensure its own survival.



The Tau are always intrigued, and more than a little disturbed, to be faced with the Imperium of Man's deep-seated and abiding prejudice against machine intelligences. The Earth caste, in particular, cannot fully understand the sheer abhorrence that humans reserve for machines that can think for themselves. To them, the artificially intelligent drones are just another technological tool to use for the advancement of the Greater Good. For the Tau, the drones save time and lives, and to regard machine intelligences with suspicion is yet another example of the backwards, barbaric superstition they must overcome.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Gun Drone	2	2	3	4	1	4	1	7	4+
Marker Drone	2	2	3	4	1	4	1	7	4+
Shield Drone	2	2	3	4	1	4	1	7	4+

UNIT TYPE: Jet Pack Infantry (Drone).

WARGEAR: Markerlight (Marker Drone only) (pg 68), twin-linked pulse carbine (Gun Drone only) (pg 66), shield generator (Shield Drone only) (pg 69).

SPECIAL RULES: Supporting Fire (pg 32).

COMMANDER FARSIGHT

HERO OF VIOR'LA, PROTEGÉ OF PURETIDE, THE BANE OF GREENSKINS, RENOUNCED TRAITOR TO THE GREATER GOOD

There is no figure in Tau history as divisive as Commander O'Shovah. The most famous warrior of Vior'la, Farsight's greatest victories were against the Orks on the oxide-deserts of Arkunahsa. There, clad in his battlesuit, he led a masterful campaign that defeated armies numbering hundreds of times greater than his own loyal troops. Farsight's training, much of which was under the direction of Commander Puretide himself, had taught him the use of terrain and the importance of a bold, decisive stroke to cripple his enemies. Preferring to eschew long-ranged firepower, O'Shovah encouraged the aggressive spirit of the Fire caste in his warriors, and they won many bitter battles at close range. It was O'Shovah's tactical brilliance that earned him his famous title 'Farsight'.

Along with the forces of another of Puretide's pupils, Commander O'Shaserra, Farsight's Hunter Cadres were instrumental in holding off the advance of Imperial forces on the sept world of Dal'yth during the battles that raged back and forth across the Damocles Gulf. His attacking style left Imperial forces reeling, unsure where the next hammer blow would fall. Although victorious in eventually driving the forces of the Imperium from the face of Dal'yth, the Tau Empire was facing a time of great disconcertion.



The Tau, always so assured of the superiority of their cause and of their abilities, had been swept away from dozens of newly colonised planets and even suffered an attack on one of their sept worlds. The Ethereals named this period the *Nont'ka* – the time of questioning. Realising that some were beginning to doubt their message of superiority, the Ethereals sought for a new hero to rekindle the spirit of expansion and to firmly re-establish the Tau's rightful destiny – the ultimate triumph of the Greater Good.

In the wake of their victory on Dal'yth, the Ethereal Council ordered vast reclamation attacks to reconquer their recently lost colonies. Many successful Commanders were considered to lead the spearhead, but in the end, it was Farsight's flawless battle record and his flair for dramatic victories that earned him a formal ceremony of recognition from the Ethereal High Council. The Water caste's top propaganda efforts were put behind Commander Farsight's Coalition – perhaps the largest fleet of warships, ground troops and colony ships yet assembled by the Tau Empire.

However, there was no need for embellished accounts, for in the ensuing battles O'Shovah truly established his greatness. The bulk of Mankind's forces had been conscripted to fight a menace in another sector, and the Tau quickly re-established rule over planet after planet. With a skill bordering on prescience, Commander Farsight knew when to attack brashly and when to employ skilful manoeuvres and ambushes. Not since the peak of Commander Puretide's triumphs had the Tau Empire been so united by the deeds of a single warrior.

The Farsight Expedition, as it came to be known, ran into unexpected difficulties with Orks who had taken advantage of the Tau's war with the Imperium. With no opposing military power in the region to stop them, the greenskin forces were free to expand their territorial raids, subjecting many of the nearby planets to the brutal whims of their cruel overlords. O'Shovah abandoned his recolonisation efforts to confront the Orks, drawing his forces far from their assignments and eventually into a decade long war across multiple star systems. The battles raged far beyond the borders of the empire, yet Farsight was wholly absorbed by this new campaign. Although claiming many victories, Commander Farsight grew increasingly embittered – feeling that his Coalition was not receiving the continued support it deserved. The loyal warriors beneath him, a dedicated troop of acolytes, strongly agreed.

Back on the distant planet T'au, the Ethereal Council debated their next move, for many had grown wary of the strong-willed Commander, feeling a growing breach with their appointed leader that had nothing to do with the great distance between them. Even as Aun'Va came to the conclusion that the wayward Farsight must be relieved of command and recalled, a new disaster struck. It happened at the periphery of the Damocles Gulf during a battle

on Arthas Moloch, a deserted world save for strange monuments and ruined shrines of some long-forgotten culture. All of the Ethereals in Farsight's expedition were slain by an unknown enemy.

Undaunted, Farsight weathered the savage attacks of the unrelenting foe, pulling back in the hope of learning more about the fiends that had attacked them before launching a retaliation. Soon, however, the mysterious beings disappeared with the same suddenness with which they had arrived. With the world apparently cleansed, Commander Farsight pushed ever onwards, pursuing the Orks lest they make good their escape. He did so in strict disobedience of protocol, for without the guidance of any Ethereals, it is a Fire caste Commander's duty to immediately report back to the High Council and await new orders.

Before long, Farsight was beyond the reach of even the most advanced communication relays and was no longer operating within the bounds of the Tau Empire. Years went by and no messages came back, until it was eventually assumed that their never-defeated Commander had, at long last, been vanquished – dying on a distant planet, far from the stars that lit the Tau Empire. All castes on every sept bowed their heads low when the loss of this revered hero was broadcast across the Empire.

Yet Commander Farsight was not dead. Obstinate choosing to press on with his personal crusade rather than return to the bosom of his Empire, Farsight instead established a string of heavily fortified strongholds across the frontier space on the far side of the Damocles Gulf, a region long forbidden to the Tau. Even now, sporadic signals from long-range probes are received by the Ethereal High Council, which confirm the continued existence of the Farsight Enclaves. There has even been evidence – unique signature signals from his personalised early-model Crisis battlesuit and a few far-ranged visuals – that Farsight himself still lives. This is, itself, a great and confounding mystery, for it would mean that Farsight has lived for at least three centuries, considerably longer than the ordinary lifespan of any Tau, save only the unknowable Ethereals.

It may be that O'Shovah is extending his lifespan through some technological process or that a series of successors has taken up the mantle of Farsight. Regardless, the Ethereal High Council has labelled O'Shovah a renegade, and has forbidden any communications with the rebels.

SIGNATURE SYSTEM

The Dawn Blade: *The Dawn Blade is an alien sword discovered in the ruins of Arthas Moloch. Its sculpted surface paints glittering arcs of destruction as it is swung.*

Range	S	AP	Type
-	User	2	Melee, Armourbane

THE FORBIDDEN ZONE

The Tau Empire launches many probes towards the Forbidden Zone, the cluster of star systems beyond the far side of the Damocles Gulf – although few have ever returned. The strange eddies and unreadable energies that drift in that region doubtlessly damage or reroute a portion of those lost probes, but many more are destroyed by orbital defence stations that blockade all entry, save only for their own ships.

Beyond that formidable ring of floating fortresses are the Farsight Enclaves. Scans from those few probes to successfully beam back signals reveal a string of heavily built-up worlds with large populations, including nodal cities expanded from colony domes and entire moonbases converted to manufacturing. When last seen trailing the Orks, Farsight's Coalition bore the symbols of their septs – predominately Vior'la, but also Sa'cea, Tau'n and several others. When sighted generations later, these forces and fleets bore markings similar in design to those used by the Tau Empire, but in colours and patterns never sanctioned. Like any distant colony, much of the equipment and armour used by those within the Farsight Enclaves is slightly dated – the equipment most prevalent at the time of Farsight's disappearance. There has been, however, unsettling evidence of classified technology and recent prototypes present within the Enclaves. Time will tell whether this is the result of spycraft, theft or traitors to the Greater Good who have been aiding those within Farsight's domain.

Despite the Tau Empire's efforts to rewrite history – either avoiding mention of the fallen hero or painting him as a cowardly deserter – there is still support for Farsight amongst the existing septs. Many in the Fire caste, especially those from Vior'la, maintain the image of O'Shovah as a trailblazer, although none dare show such dissent openly in the presence of an Ethereal. The Ethereal High Council has forbidden all travel and communications to that sector of the galactic west. Special councils, composed of Ethereals and auxiliary guards, are dispatched to question any who are rumoured to have contacts or sympathies with the Farsight Enclaves. Few who are questioned are seen again. On the rare occasions when warriors bearing the distinctive red armour and markings from the Enclaves are seen within the Tau Empire, the Ethereal High Council have issued high mobilisation, although there have yet to be any confrontations.

'I'VE SEEN THINGS YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE – ENTIRE WORLDS IN FLAMES, CHAINS OF SUPERNOVAS ON THE EDGE OF NOTHINGNESS, THE GREAT HOLE IN SPACE. I AM CHANGED, AN OUTCAST NOW....'

– COMMANDER O'SHOVA – PERSONAL RECORDINGS

WS BS S T W I A Ld Sv

Commander Farsight 5 5 5 4 4 5 4 10 3+

UNIT TYPE: Jet Pack Infantry (Character).

WARGEAR: Crisis battlesuit (pg 70), plasma rifle (pg 66), shield generator (pg 69).

WARLORD TRAIT: Through Boldness, Victory (pg 32).

SPECIAL RULES: Independent Character, Preferred Enemy (Orks), Supporting Fire (pg 32), Very Bulky.

COMMANDER SHADOWSUN

HEROINE OF THE 3RD SPHERE EXPANSION, SPEARHEAD OF THE GREATER GOOD, THE TRUE DISCIPLE OF COMMANDER PURETIDE

O'Shaserra, better known as Commander Shadowsun, is a dynamic leader who rose to recent fame in the battles of the K'resh Expansion. There, she smashed the Ork menace, and her cadres suffered historically low casualties in return. All of Shadowsun's victories are marked by unrivalled efficiency, a trait not surprising from one of Commander Puretide's most promising pupils.

Over 300 years ago, O'Shaserra was a brilliant young warrior; her successes and matchless performances at the Fire caste academies earning her recognition as one of the most able military minds in the Tau Empire. As such, she was granted the honour of studying personally under the ailing, but legendary Commander Puretide. Despite being the youngest of all Puretide's protégés, O'Shaserra scored exceptionally well in all simulations, outstripping all others, save one – the most highly favoured of all Puretide's students, Commander O'Shovah. From the start, theirs was a bitter rivalry, as the two most gifted Commanders strove to gain their wizened master's approval.

During the battle on the Dal'yth sept world, in which the Imperium's Damocles Crusade was finally halted, it was Commander Farsight's audacious counter-attacks that drew the most attention; however, they would never have been possible without O'Shaserra's patient ploy to draw out and overextend the Imperial battle lines. This ongoing competition between the two Commanders was abruptly halted by the death of the venerable Commander Puretide. The Ethereal Council was not fully convinced the mind-capture devices and holograms of the Earth caste engineers would be able to recreate the teachings of their fabled teacher. So, to ensure Puretide's teachings were preserved for future generations, it was decided that several of his top students would be placed in stasis. Upon the orders of the Ethereal Council, a select few, including O'Shaserra, slept in frozen animation, unaging, until a time came when they would be most needed; a time of great expansion and furious battle.

Although Aun'Va had planned to awaken Commander O'Shaserra at the dawn of the Third Sphere Expansion, the largest Ork invasion of the Tau Empire accelerated the Ethereal Supreme's meticulous calculations. Yet even this, the sagacious Aun'Va turned into an advantage. Appearing in a time of great need, O'Shaserra has once more proven herself a patient huntress, meticulous in her planning, yet swift in action. Her ability to draw foes into well-conceived killing zones lured numerous Ork armies to merciless deaths during the fighting of what is now called the Great War of Confederation. Yet, as the situation dictated, O'Shaserra could be bold. In order to end the fierce fighting in the K'resh Expansion, she led a Stealth Cadre straight into the heart of the Ork encampment to deliver a killing stroke. Timing her strike to coincide with an artificial eclipse, the Tau forces used the jet packs of their XV25 battlesuits to deploy from low-swooping Orca dropships.

Under the cover of the unnatural darkness, the greenskins never knew what hit them. In an instant, their leaders were riddled by burst cannons before being finished off with searing shots from fusion blasters. It was O'Shaserra herself who personally sought out and targeted the Warlord – bringing down the hulking alien with precision fire. As the alien hordes milled in confusion, the rest of O'Shaserra's cadres joined the fray. Without their bosses to lead them, most of the Orks panicked and fled, only to run into well-placed ambushes. By the time the sunlight burnt through the obscuring veil, the battle was over and a new Fire caste legend was born.

Aun'Va was quick to promote the dedicated Commander, for in her, he saw embodied all that was noble about the Fire caste's pursuit of the Greater Good. Here was a Commander who would not shirk from duty, who would not forget her vows to her people or her loyalty to Aun'Va himself. When he declared the Third Sphere Expansion, Aun'Va also announced the warrior who would spearhead the most important of attacks – Commander O'Shaserra, now called Shadowsun in honour of (what was then) her greatest triumph.



In her first speech as supreme Commander, O'Shaserra made her address from the Mont'yr battle dome, the site where Farsight had famously trained. Arriving resplendent in her new prototype XV22 battlesuit, it was a sight to stir the martial hearts of all who viewed her. With the entire Fire caste watching, Shadowsun began by firing her weapons at the statue of Farsight, obliterating it in a burst of white-hot desecration. As the dust settled, she outlined the new campaigns they would soon embark on. She spoke of honour, the sacred Code of Fire and the all-important law of the Tau'va. After this address, every Fire Warrior shouted in one voice, ready to follow their new Commander to any end.

Within days, the Third Sphere Expansion had begun, and under Shadowsun's leadership, the Tau Empire has been unstoppable. With Imperial attention elsewhere, and the Tyranid and Ork menace temporarily contained, Fire caste spearheads drove into the outlying systems of the Damocles Gulf. Leading from the front, Shadowsun seems to be everywhere at once and her assault on Agrellan, a hive world of the Imperium, has opened up the entire Dovar system.

Although O'Shovah's exact whereabouts still remain a mystery, his shadow of discontent has been laid to rest for a time, as the Tau Empire is swept up in the continual news of Shadowsun's impressive victories. Yet it is whispered by some that Shadowsun has secret orders to bring the rogue to justice. Confrontation seems inevitable.

UPGRADES

Commander Shadowsun is often accompanied into battle by prototype drones.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Command-link Drone	2	2	3	4	1	4	1	7	4+
MV52 Shield Drone	2	2	3	4	1	4	1	7	4+

UNIT TYPE: Jet Pack Infantry (Drone).

WARGEAR:

Command-link Drone:

Command-link: A Command-link Drone can nominate a single friendly unit within 12" at the beginning of each friendly Shooting phase. That unit re-rolls To Hit rolls of 1 until the end of the phase.

MV52 Shield Drone:

MV52 Shield Generator: The MV52 shield generator confers a 3+ invulnerable save.

TESTED UNDER FIRE

Battle gear technology is ever evolving as the Fire caste feeds back their experience to Earth caste technicians. Current marks of battlesuits and drones are easily mass-produced and are known to be reliable, yet there are always improvements to be made. At all times, there are any number of additional models and upgrades in development. These new and experimental battlesuits and battle drones are issued to trusted commanders or their top subordinates, so that they can be field-tested in the crucible of battle and their performance analysed.

The XV22 Stealth battlesuit is the latest evolution of the scaled down Stealth suit. Its cloaking technology allows Shadowsun to blend in with her surroundings, giving her a greater degree of protection and making her nearly impossible to target in dense terrain. Whether or not the battlesuit becomes approved for general use will be determined by its performance in the battles of the Third Sphere Expansion. Thus far, it has proven effective, most notably when Shadowsun ambushed a column of Leman Russ tanks during the fighting on Mu'gulath Bay. While her fusion blasters ensured that none of the lumbering battle tanks would survive to make their counter-attack, the ability to disappear into the terrain kept the foe from drawing an accurate bead upon her position. The force shield of the prototype MV52 Shield Drone – the most potent of its kind yet invented – harmlessly blocked the one battle cannon shot that would have found its mark. The new Command-Link Drone has also proven useful, allowing Shadowsun to better coordinate the fire of nearby teams, who can mow down the enemy with relentless volleys.

It can only be a matter of time before these prototypes are moved into mass production. Yet as potent as this battle gear is, Shadowsun is quick to recall the fabled words of her old master, for it was Purity who said 'The mind that directs the sword is more dangerous than the blade.' And so, in truth, the future of XV22 battlesuits and the new marks of drone relies as much upon Shadowsun as her own destiny relies on them.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Cdr. Shadowsun	4	5	4	3	3	4	4	10	3+

UNIT TYPE: Jet Pack Infantry (Character).

WARGEAR: Two fusion blasters (pg 65), advanced targeting system (pg 68).

WARLORD TRAIT: A Ghost Who Walks Among Us (pg 32).

SPECIAL RULES: Independent Character, Infiltrate, Supporting Fire (pg 32).

Defender of the Greater Good:

All Stealth Shas'ui and Stealth Shas'vre models in the same unit as Commander Shadowsun have the Sworn Protector special rule (pg 41).

SIGNATURE SYSTEM

XV22 Battlesuit: This experimental battlesuit, gifted to O'Shaserra, incorporates the latest advances in cloaking technology, targeting systems and miniature shield generators.

The XV22 Stealth battlesuit confers a 3+ Armour Save and 5+ invulnerable save. Like other Stealth battlesuits, the XV22 comes equipped with a multi-tracker (pg 69) and blacksun filter (pg 69), and grants the wearer the Stealth and Shrouded special rules. Furthermore, Shadowsun can shoot each of her fusion blasters at a different target. If she is firing while in a unit, at least one fusion blaster must be fired at her unit's target.

AUN'VA

MASTER OF THE UNDYING SPIRIT, SPEAKER OF GREAT TRUTHS,
FATHER OF HIS PEOPLE, THE GREAT LEADER, THE SHINING LIGHT

Aun'Va is the oldest and wisest of the venerated Ethereal caste, and his hand can be seen at work behind many of the great successes throughout Tau history. Ethereals have longer life spans than other castes, but the fact that their Great Leader continues to live many times beyond even the most venerable of Ethereals is never questioned; it is merely another part of Aun'Va's legend. As the highest ranking member of the High Council, or Ethereal Supreme, Aun'Va's word is the ultimate law across not just the T'au sept, but over the whole of the Tau Empire. All Ethereals are given the utmost respect – but Aun'Va is revered beyond others of his caste and even the merest suggestion of a visit to a Tau colony by this esteemed leader is enough to double production in the Earth caste factories and spark planet-wide ceremonies.

Despite his advanced age and position as spiritual leader to his race, Aun'Va much prefers to be amongst his people – feeling he is most effective when he can lead from the front. History is replete with examples of Aun'Va in the midst of conquest, inspiring the Fire caste to great deeds or arriving in battle zones to bolster morale. It was his awe-inspiring presence that impelled the Tau to rid the Si'coa

system of the hateful Reek, giving each cadre the will to see the bloody campaign completed. Upon the flanks of Mount Scion it was Aun'Va who pronounced the fate of the Orks of Waaagh! Grognik – a sentence enacted by the assembled Fire Warriors with a righteous rage.



Although protected by his Honour Guard and a force shield that envelops him and his hover-throne, it is not Aun'Va's way to enter the fight directly. Rather, he guides the Fire Warriors through his wisdom and his ability to inspire his followers to seemingly impossible feats. In his august presence, Fire Warriors have been known to unleash more accurate volleys, enabling them to cut down oncoming opposition, shrug off otherwise mortal wounds in order to continue the battle, or hold their position to the bitter end despite overwhelming enemy assaults.

In his most epic pronouncement to date, Aun'Va declared the beginning of Third Sphere Expansion. Flanked by a full ceremonial guard, Aun'Va gave a slow, deliberate speech, culminating in a rousing call to arms, a demand to proliferate across the stars; an order for them to seize what must be taken. The guiding light of the Greater Good must reach those worlds trapped in the darkness of their barbaric ways. As his words echoed into silence, untold billions of Tau stood outside the council dome, or listened to the broadcast throughout the Empire – all bowed low as one.

Aun'Va praised the works of his people, exhorting each to reach for yet greater heights. He expressed wonder at the latest Earth caste inventions and applauded the Water caste, noting the alien diplomats neatly arrayed in attendance. To the Air caste, Aun'Va dedicated a moment of reflection for their contributions, and for the Fire caste, the ancient being rose off his hover-dais and offered the old Hunter salute – a deed no Fire Warrior could witness and remain unmoved. He even offered advice to his caste-brethren, the Ethereals, saying that the only way to lead was from the front. The barbaric races of the galaxy were desperate for enlightenment and only the castes combined, working for the Greater Good, could bring it to them. In this way, all castes were motivated as never before.

Aun'Va's next act was to decry the renegade Farsight, naming Commander Shadowsun as the new hero and military leader of the Tau Empire. She would lead the Third Sphere Expansion, but the elderly Ethereal vowed that she



would not lead alone, for he himself would lend his council, personally heading to the forefront to guide her and the largest armies ever assembled by the Tau Empire. Then, before departing, Aun'Va spoke one last time, reminding every listener that personal sacrifice for the Greater Good of the Empire was required from every Tau.

True to his word, during the initial stages of the Third Sphere Expansion, Aun'Va was constantly at the front, heedless of personal danger in his zeal. His presence instilled courage, helping to drive the Fire Warriors ever forward. The other Ethereals of the High Council attempted to dissuade Aun'Va from such risks; however, they realised the futility of their admonishments when they saw the holovid clips that were beamed back to the Empire. Every Tau, whether a worker in a factory complex on the busiest sept world, or an atmosphere engineer converting the air on a barren moon base of a future colony, was required to view such materials. There, they saw the battles of the front line, including Aun'Va on his hover-throne entering a breach in a battered Imperial fortress wall, Aun'Va directing the devastating volleys of a Fire Warrior line, and Aun'Va standing next to the new technological marvel of the XV104 Riptide – piles of recently destroyed enemy tanks in the background. None who saw Aun'Va's noble attempts to persuade the last Human defenders to lay down their arms could help but be impressed. Although the barbarians refused and in the end had to be eradicated, it was still a sight that stirred something in every Tau, triggering a reaction of pride and determination.

Aun'Va knew that to achieve victory he needed commitment from the warriors at the tip of the spear, as well as from every citizen behind them. With the Third Sphere Expansion, the Empire was on a total war standing; a whole realm committed to conquest and control in an overwhelmingly hostile galaxy. The zeitgeist of the people was pivotal, for belief in progress and continued faith in their own superiority would sustain them in the coming years.

All across the Tau Empire morale was high, and all castes recognised that with Aun'Va to guide them, they could not fail in their destiny. The Tau would surely bring enlightenment to the galaxy.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Aun'Va	1	3	2	3	4	1	1	10	5+
Ethereal Guard	4	4	3	3	2	3	3	10	5+

UNIT TYPE: Infantry (Character).

Ethereal Guard are **Infantry**.

WARGEAR:

Aun'Va: Recon armour (pg 70).

Ethereal Guard: Recon armour (pg 70), honour blades (pg 65), photon grenades.

WARLORD TRAIT: Exemplar of the Selfless Cause (pg 32).

SPECIAL RULES:

Aun'Va: Bonding Knife Ritual (pg 32),

Failure is Not An Option (pg 35),

Invocation of the Elements (pg 35), Stubborn, Very Bulky.

Great Invocation: When using the Invocation of the Elements special rule, Aun'Va invokes up to two elemental powers per turn, instead of just one.

Supreme Loyalty: Whilst Aun'Va is alive, all friendly units from *Codex: Tau Empire* on the battlefield re-roll all failed Fear, Morale, Pinning and Regroup tests.

Ethereal Guard: Bonding Knife Ritual (pg 32), Stubborn.

SIGNATURE SYSTEM

Paradox of Duality: *This staff projects a protective field whose strength grows with the power of the weapons fired into it.*

Whenever Aun'Va's unit suffers one or more unsaved Wounds from a shooting attack, roll a D6. If the result is equal to or higher than the AP of the shot, the Wound is discounted, exactly as if a cover save had been passed (Wounds from AP1 weapons are therefore automatically discounted). This roll cannot be made against weapons with AP-.

THE ETHEREAL SUPREME

After a long rule, the Ethereal Supreme, Aun' Wei, knew it was time for his Last Walk, the ceremony when an ancient member of that secretive caste disappears forever within one of their mysterious temple-domes. Before departing, however, it is tradition that he nominate his successor as head of the Ethereal Council.

So it was that Aun'Va assumed the role of the Great Leader of his people, assuming the title that translates best as 'Master of the Undying Spirit' – or, he that directs the Greater Good. This choice was long ordained, for from his beginning, Aun'Va displayed skills that made him a master of his caste. Even without technological aids, he was able to inspire those nearby to impossible acts or bend their wills to comply with his wishes. When his natural talents were boosted through artificial means, Aun'Va could implant powerful auto-suggestions that would last a lifetime and instil unbreakable loyalty.

It is whispered by others of the High Council, that when Aun'Va asks a question, he has already given the responder the answer. So natural is his skill, so powerful are his methods, that those who agree with his councils are never sure if it was ever their idea to do so in the first place. In all his long life, there has only been one Tau who was able to defy Aun'Va, and all know that it is best to not mention his name.

Upon waking from cryogenic sleep, O'Shassera was debriefed by Aun'Va alone. Never was the tale of Farsight's betrayal more skilfully told, and the story of his disregard for the Greater Good caused the young Commander to shake with rage. Since that day, Aun'Va has had no further fears for the loyalty of the Fire caste and has set his concentration fully on the expansion of the Tau Empire.

LONGSTRIKE

HAMMERHEAD PILOT, GUNSHIP ACE, TITAN-SLAYER,
TERROR OF T'ROS, HERO OF T'AU

Master Gunship pilot Shas'la T'au Sha'ng, now better known as Longstrike, has quickly become the Fire caste's most heralded tank ace. Since his first training session, he exhibited an almost innate ability to handle a Hammerhead. With the start of the Third Sphere of Expansion, his skills were soon put to the ultimate test in the heat of battle.

It was on T'ros that the young Hammerhead pilot earned the name Longstrike and got his first taste of the repugnant ways in which humans fight their wars. As part of an Armoured Interdiction Cadre, he was assigned to a contingent fighting in the western deserts. There, over the arid flatlands, the Hammerhead Gunships clashed for days against the full might of the Imperial Guard's Leman Russ companies. For all their smoke-spewing and crude design, the human battle tanks were dangerous, even more so as they outnumbered the Tau armour by at least six to one. Early in the engagement, Sha'ng showed poise and a remarkable aim, making every shot count until the horizon was littered with fiery wrecks. Yet the battle was costly for the Tau as well. All of Sha'ng's bond-mates – those who had undergone the version of the ta'lissera unique to gunship pilots – were slain. The human tankers showed no remorse, grinding their heavy tracks over wounded Tau, or even their own troops in their eagerness to press the attack.

Sha'ng continued to battle, steadily backing his Hammerhead away to put intervening terrain between himself and incoming fire. With every discharge of his railgun, smoke blossomed from another Leman Russ in the distance. The tank duel went on until a school of Razorshark Strike Fighters flew over to finish off the attackers, and Longstrike's legend was begun. In the ongoing battles that marked the Imperium's retreat from T'ros, Longstrike continued to cull the Imperial armour, including a famous headshot that felled a mighty Warhound Titan.

Due to his unerring aim, Longstrike was chosen to trial the new XV02 pilot battlesuit. With its upgraded interface, he could become one with his vehicle – reacting instantaneously alongside various AI functions within the Hammerhead. He would also be able to make better use of incoming markerlight data, enabling him to lock on to targets with even greater accuracy. He could support nearby teams in ways that vehicles, even those equipped with targeting relays, never could before. The combination of Longstrike's formidable skills and the XV02 battlesuit have made him deadlier than ever. Redeployed for the major battle on Mu'gulath Bay, Longstrike destroyed innumerable gun and bunker emplacements along the Imperial line. As the fighting moved into the narrow hive streets, Longstrike's lightning fast reactions allowed him to destroy infantry attempting to emerge from cover and attack the surrounding Fire Warriors. Before the last pockets of resistance were wiped out, word of the Hammerhead pilot who could not miss had spread across the Fire caste. By that time, Sha'ng was already onboard a transport for the next engagement of the Third Sphere Expansion.



SPECIAL RULES:

Preferred Enemy (Imperial Guard), Tank Hunter.

Hammerhead Ace: Longstrike is always bought as an upgrade for a Hammerhead Gunship (see army list).

Longstrike's Hammerhead is Ballistic Skill 5. If Longstrike's Hammerhead is destroyed, he is slain; Longstrike and his Hammerhead are a single unit for purposes of Victory Points.

SIGNATURE SYSTEM

XV02 Pilot Battlesuit: *This prototype allows a pilot to work in tandem with his vehicle's AI by processing the cadre tactical network and incoming data so quickly, the pilot can react rapidly to enemies attacking his vehicle or nearby units.*

The XV02 Pilot battlesuit incorporates a blacksun filter. Longstrike's Hammerhead can fire Overwatch and has the Supporting Fire special rule (pg 32). Furthermore, Longstrike's Hammerhead is not limited to firing Overwatch once each phase (it can still only fire Overwatch once against each eligible charging unit).

DARKSTRIDER

THE SHADOW THAT STRIKES, THE ELUSIVE,
HE THAT WALKS UNSEEN

Despite his many heroics, there is something unsettling about Sub-Commander El'Myamoto, the Tau more commonly called Darkstrider. Although all of the Fire caste regard him as a cunning tactician and a warrior to be reckoned with, his unconventional methods and disregard for proper protocol have stirred up much trouble and made many internal enemies.

It began when Myamoto, a shas'ui borne on T'au, passed his Trial by Fire. Scorning the honour of donning a battlesuit to join the Crisis Teams, he was next offered the opportunity to join the Stealth Teams – a formation noted for its unorthodox methods. This choice too, Myamoto derided, preferring to return to the Pathfinder Teams with which he had first served. Time and again, Myamoto led his team into the most deadly of situations, but always escaped, bringing glory to his cadre. It was he that shut down the strange mechanisms of the Necrons on the moons of Gal'yth, and he who hunted down the tri-headed beast that terrorised the mining colonies of Nep'tan. During the Great Wars of Confederation, when the grim leader earned the name Darkstrider, he infiltrated Ork camps and used markerlights to pick out components of Gargants under construction.

It was his team that set the homing beacon on Warlord Gruzzguts' mechanical armour. Yet for all his heroics, Darkstrider always spurned offers to command, preferring instead to lead raiding missions and terror attacks behind enemy lines.

Tradition is everything to the Fire caste, and their adherence to the Code of Fire demands, above all things, respect for Ethereals, military rank and more experienced warriors. Through declined promotions and subtle inflections when speaking to his superiors, Myamoto regularly walks the fine line near insubordination – nearly unheard of in the Fire caste. Some Commanders refuse to work with Darkstrider, claiming that he refuses council. Yet others, most notably Shadowsun herself, value the sly tactics and obvious bravery of Darkstrider. Gifted with a prototype structural analyser, Darkstrider has recently returned from his successes against the Space Marines in the Zeist Campaign. His is not the way of the armoured battlesuit, but his ability to tie up more valuable forces and then slip away has contributed to a string of victories that none can deny.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Darkstrider	4	5	3	3	3	3	3	9	5+

UNIT TYPE: Infantry (Character).

WARGEAR: Recon armour (pg 70), pulse carbine (pg 66), photon grenades, blacksun filter (pg 68), markerlight (pg 68).

SPECIAL RULES: Independent Character, Outflank, Scouts, Supporting Fire (pg 32).

Fight on Foot: Darkstrider can only join Fire Warrior and Pathfinder units.

Fighting Retreat: Darkstrider, and his unit, can consolidate D6" in any direction immediately after firing Overwatch (before rolls for charge range are made).

SIGNATURE SYSTEM

Structural Analyser: This device utilises a new type of sensor to scan for the most critical enemy weak points and then feeds that information back into targeting computers.

When Darkstrider targets a non-vehicle enemy unit with a shooting attack, that unit suffers -1 Toughness against hits from that shooting attack – this applies to Darkstrider's entire unit's shooting attacks, not just his own. Use the target's modified Toughness to determine if the target suffers Instant Death. This ability cannot be used when firing Snap Shots.



AUN'SHI

MASTER OF THE BLADE, SAVIOUR OF THE FIRE CASTE, HERO OF FIO'VASH

Hailing from the proud martial sept of Vior'la, Aun'Shi is an indomitable Ethereal whose iron will has steeled the resolve of multitudes of Tau across many frontiers. A modest hero of numerous battles, Aun'Shi longs for peace but is bound by duty to his comrades, and he is wholly committed to furthering the cause of the Greater Good. Because of his exemplary service, and his habit of joining them for battle rituals and training, Aun'Shi is lionised by the Fire caste. Thanks to his long career and many exploits, Aun'Shi is also seen by the Fire caste as a sure sign of victory, and he is greeted everywhere he travels with many salutes and deep, respectful bows.

At the time of the battle that catapulted Aun'Shi to the position of a full-scale hero of the Empire, he was already nearing the age when an Ethereal can choose to retire to a life of contemplation within the Temple-domes of their caste. Due to his many successes, Aun'Shi was entitled to spend his last years on the paradise world of the Au'taal – an honour accorded to only those who have excelled in their drive for the Greater Good. Aun'Shi's last assignment was to bolster a new colony named Kel'tyr.

Established on a planet that turned out to be infested with Orks, the colony's progress had been slow, but with the arrival of reinforcements and Aun'Shi's canny alien-fighting guidance, the Fire Warriors were soon able to clear the main continent. This allowed the Earth caste to construct great cities and better establish the exploitation of Kel'tyr's natural resources. On his final inspection tour, however, Aun'Shi became trapped in Fio'vash when a horde of Orks surrounded the compound. With their shas'vre beheaded by the Ork Warboss, the Fire Warriors began to panic. Leaping to action, Aun'Shi used his famed honour blade to cut the Ork leader in two, planting the weapon's haft between the shorn halves of the twitching corpse. Heartened, the Fire Warriors steadied their firing line.

Again and again the Orks were repelled from the ever-constricting perimeter. Despite the growing mounds of dead, the greenskins hurtled forwards and everywhere they reached the Tau lines, Aun'Shi was there to meet them. Tirelessly he chopped the savages down, but always, they returned. As the Orks finally closed for the kill, a relief force arrived. When they reached the only building that remained standing in Fio'vash, they were surprised to find Aun'Shi still standing guard over the few survivors, his blade dripping with Ork ichor.

News of Aun'Shi's deeds travelled fast. Aun'Va knew well that the Tau must have new heroes, and here was an Ethereal, a living legend amongst the Fire caste and the saviour of Fio'vash. Rather than allow such a valuable warrior to fade away, it was decreed that Aun'Shi should continue in his duties and lead fresh expeditions. Known as the 'aged wonder', Aun'Shi continues to bring great fortune to the Fire caste, leading them to yet more victories from the forefront of the Third Sphere of Expansion.



	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv
Aun'Shi	5	3	3	3	3	5	4	10	-

UNIT TYPE: Infantry (Character).

WARGEAR: Honour blade (pg 65), EMP grenades, photon grenades, shield generator (pg 69).

SPECIAL RULES: Failure is Not An Option (pg 35), Independent Character, Invocation of the Elements (pg 35), Stubborn.

Blademaster: When fighting in a challenge, Aun'Shi must choose a fighting stance – either the **Patient Blade** or the **Killing Blade** – each turn, immediately before any To Hit rolls are made in the challenge.

If Aun'Shi chooses the **Patient Blade** stance, he re-rolls all failed saving throws until the end of the current phase.

If Aun'Shi chooses the **Killing Blade** stance, his honour blade has the Rending special rule until the end of the current phase.

ARSENAL OF EXPANSION

This section of *Codex: Tau Empire* lists the weapons and equipment used by the warriors of the Tau Empire, along with the rules for using them in your games of Warhammer 40,000. Equipment that is carried by named special characters is detailed in the appropriate entry in the Forces of the Tau Empire section (pages 56 to 64), while weapons and equipment used by all the other types of units are detailed here. The Signature Systems described at the end of this section are unique devices of legendary status used by the greatest heroes of the Tau.

MELEE WEAPONS

Rules for close combat weapons can be found in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

EQUALIZER

Equalizers are typically carried in pairs by some members of the Ethereal caste. They are not only badges of office, but also potent weapons that contain a powerful disruption field that can shatter armour and bone on impact.

Range	S	AP	Type
-	User	4	Melee



HONOUR BLADE

An honour blade is a long, broad-bladed spear that is used to settle disputes between Ethereal caste members in stylised bloodless duels. Against the unenlightened races of the galaxy, it is a deadly weapon used in elegant sweeping movements where the blade becomes virtually invisible.

Range	S	AP	Type
-	+2	-	Melee, Two-handed

KROOT RIFLE

In addition to its shooting ability, the Kroot rifle is fitted with blades near the muzzle and stock, which are a throwback to early Kroot fighting staves. In the hands of a Kroot, these blades make effective close combat weapons.

Range	S	AP	Type
-	User	5	Melee, Two-handed

RANGED WEAPONS

Profiles for the ranged weapons in this section are also listed in the reference section (pg 105). The full rules for flammers can be found in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

AIRBURSTING FRAGMENTATION PROJECTOR

This experimental weapon scatters fragmentation bomblets over a wide area, at a height calculated by a simple AI within each warhead to cause optimum damage.

Range	S	AP	Type
18"	4	5	Assault 1, Barrage, Ignores Cover, Large Blast



BURST WEAPONS

Burst weaponry finds use across the Tau military, primarily mounted on battlesuits and vehicles. Utilising a similar plasma induction technology found in Tau pulse technology, burst cannons are multibarrelled weapons able to sustain high rates of fire.

	Range	S	AP	Type
Burst cannon	18"	5	5	Assault 4
Heavy burst cannon				
Standard	36"	6	4	Heavy 8
Nova-charge	36"	6	4	Heavy 12, Gets Hot, Rending, Nova-charge

Nova-charge: This profile can only be used if a Riptide Shas'vere uses his nova reactor (pg 45) to charge his primary weapon.

FUSION BLASTER

Fusion blasters are anti-tank weapons that reduce reinforced armour to molten slag in the blink of an eye.

Range	S	AP	Type
18"	8	1	Assault 1, Melta

KROOT WEAPONS

Kroot use primitive slug-throwers adapted by the Tau to fire pulse rounds. Some also fire sniper rounds, which have greater stopping power, but must be reloaded between shots, making them cumbersome to wield. The Kroot rifle also comes with blades attached to the muzzle and stock, a throwback to traditional Kroot fighting staves.

	Range	S	AP	Type
Kroot gun	48"	7	4	Rapid Fire
Kroot rifle				
Pulse round	24"	4	6	Rapid Fire
Sniper round	24"	X	6	Heavy 1, Sniper

ION WEAPONS

The high-energy streams fired by ion weapons react destructively with their target, vaporising flesh and metal with equal ease. Ion weapons can be overcharged to generate a more devastating attack, but at a risk of overheating its primary power cells.

	Range	S	AP	Type
Cyclic ion blaster				
Standard	18"	7	4	Assault 3
Overcharge	18"	8	4	Heavy 1, Blast, Gets Hot
Ion accelerator				
Standard	72"	7	2	Heavy 3
Overcharge	72"	8	2	Heavy 1, Gets Hot, Large Blast
Nova-charge	72"	9	2	Ordnance 1, Gets Hot, Large Blast, Nova-charge
Ion cannon				
Standard	60"	7	3	Heavy 3
Overcharge	60"	8	3	Heavy 1, Gets Hot, Large Blast
Ion rifle				
Standard	30"	7	4	Rapid Fire
Overcharge	30"	8	4	Heavy 1, Blast, Gets Hot
Quad Ion turret				
Standard	30"	7	4	Heavy 4
Overcharge	30"	8	4	Heavy 1, Gets Hot, Large Blast

MISSILE POD WEAPONS

A simple but effective delivery system for multiple missiles, these weapon pods are used on light vehicles and heavy infantry at medium range, and are mounted on many battlesuits and drones.

	Range	S	AP	Type
Missile pod	36"	7	4	Assault 2
High-yield missile pod	36"	7	4	Heavy 4

NEUTRON BLASTER

Stinging weapons are a hybrid of Vespene and Tau technology. The crystal mounted upon each blaster emits a powerful neutron blast that is able to bypass all but the most efficiently ray shielded armour.

Range	S	AP	Type
18"	5	3	Assault 1

PLASMA RIFLE

Plasma technology is used by many races, despite its highly unstable nature. Tau favour a form of the technology that forgoes a degree of stopping power for an increased level of safety for the operator.

Range	S	AP	Type
24"	6	2	Rapid Fire



PULSE WEAPONS

Pulse technology is common within the Fire caste, and all pulse weapons utilise pulsed induction fields to propel lethal bursts of plasma over astonishing ranges. A pulse rifle or carbine is standard issue for Fire Warriors; the rifle has the longer range while the carbine utilises an underslung photon grenade launcher to get more shots.

	Range	S	AP	Type
Longshot pulse rifle	48"	X	5	Rapid Fire, Sniper
Pulse bomb	-	5	5	Heavy 1, Bomb Large Blast, One Use Only
Pulse carbine	18"	5	5	Assault 2, Pinning
Pulse pistol	12"	5	5	Pistol
Pulse rifle	30"	5	5	Rapid Fire

Bomb: The rules for Bombing Runs are found in the Warhammer 40,000 rulebook.

RAIL WEAPONS

Tau rail weapons use linear accelerator technology to project a solid projectile at hyper-velocity. It is capable of punching through the thickest of armour and of taking down the largest of enemies.

	Range	S	AP	Type
Heavy rail rifle	60"	8	1	Heavy 1
Rail rifle	30"	6	1	Rapid Fire
Railgun				
Solid shot	72"	10	1	Heavy 1
Submunition	72"	6	4	Heavy 1, Large Blast

SEEKER MISSILE

Seeker missiles are one-shot weapons usually guided to their targets by markerlights, though they can be fired independently as well.

Range	S	AP	Type
72"	8	3	Heavy 1, One Use Only

SMART MISSILE SYSTEM

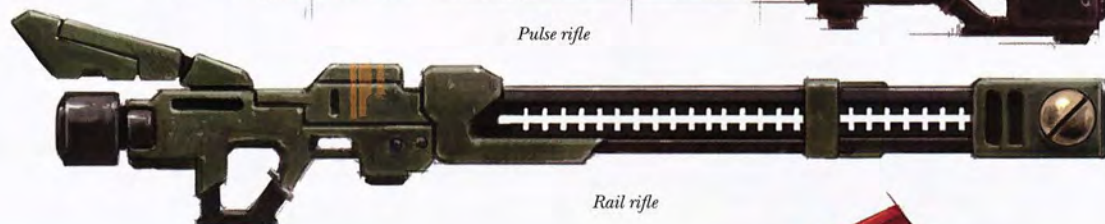
A smart missile system fires self-guiding missiles with drone intelligence, which can find targets even hiding behind terrain.

Range	S	AP	Type
30"	5	5	Heavy 4, Homing, Ignores Cover

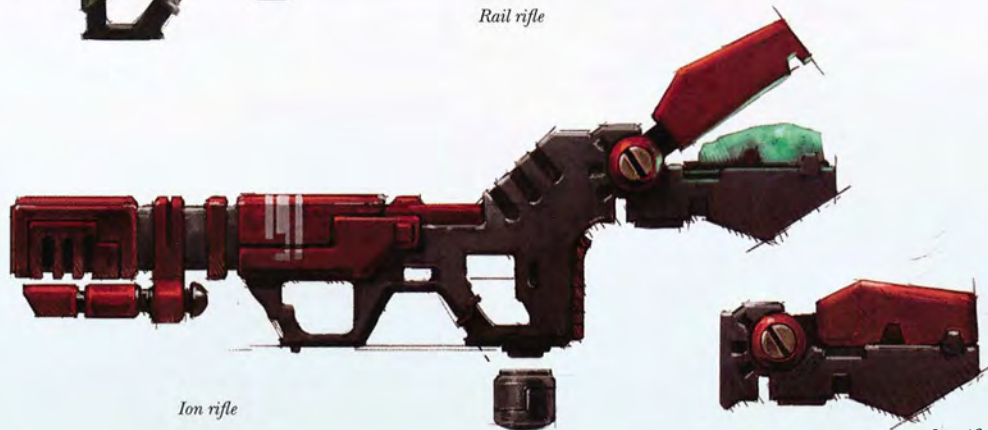
Homing: Smart missile systems can be fired at targets out of the unit's line of sight.



Pulse rifle



Rail rifle



Ion rifle



Ion rifle power source



Burst cannon



Honour blade



Kroot rifle



High-yield missile pod



Standard missile loadout



SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Rules for the following grenades can be found in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook:

Photon grenades *
* see defensive grenades

EMP grenades **
** see haywire grenades

ADVANCED TARGETING SYSTEM

This specialised target acquisition system enables the battlesuit to identify and pick out priority targets in the midst of battle.

Any To Hit roll of a 6 made in the Shooting phase by a model with an advanced targeting system is a Precision Shot. If a character has an advanced targeting system, any To Hit roll of 5 or 6 they make in the Shooting phase is a Precision shot.

BLACKSUN FILTER

This advanced optical system enhances and magnifies a warrior's low-light vision whilst simultaneously filtering bright flares of light that could blind him in battle.

A model with a blacksun filter has the Night Vision special rule and is immune to the effects of the Blind special rule.

COUNTERFIRE DEFENCE SYSTEM

These valuable AI sensor suites, first designed to counter the threat of charging Ork hordes, incorporate predictive logic circuits to ensure that assaulting enemies are met with a withering curtain of unerringly accurate battlesuit fire.

A model with a counterfire defence system fires Overwatch at Ballistic Skill 2, rather than Ballistic Skill 1.

DRONE CONTROLLER

A drone controller acts as an interface between a Fire caste operator and the AI-battle programs of nearby drones.

All Gun Drones, Marker Drones and Sniper Drones in the same unit as a model with a drone controller use the bearer's Ballistic Skill instead of their own. If a unit contains several Drone Controllers, use the highest Ballistic Skill amongst the bearers.

EARLY WARNING OVERRIDE

This sensor suite has been calibrated to detect the electronic signatures of teleport beams and orbital-entry jump systems and jolt the battlesuit's weapons to lock-on status before the target has a chance to react.

All weapons on a model with an early warning override have the Interceptor special rule.

MARKERLIGHT

A markerlight is a hand-held device that projects a simple beam onto a target. Once an enemy has been 'painted' by such a beam, a torrent of targeting data is fed into the Cadre tactical network, relaying ranges, triangulating optimum firing trajectories and superimposing aiming vectors to other Tau units, allowing them to engage the target with unerring accuracy.

Markerlights are ranged weapons with the following profile:

Range	S	AP	Type
36"	-	-	Heavy 1, Target Acquired

Target Acquired: Markerlights cannot directly cause damage or Wounds. Instead, each time a unit suffers a hit with this special rule, place a markerlight counter next to it (no saves can be taken against these hits). Markerlight counters remain next to their unit until the end of the current phase or until they are used (whichever comes first).

Immediately before a unit from *Codex: Tau Empire* shoots at a target that has one or more markerlight counters, it can declare it is using one or more of the markerlight abilities listed below. Each ability costs a number of markerlight counters – remove this number of markerlight counters from the target immediately when the ability is declared. A unit can combine any number of markerlight abilities – providing that there are enough counters.

Note that as markerlight counters are removed from the target before the shooting attack is made, it is impossible for a unit to benefit from its own markerlights.

• **Pinpoint:**..... Markerlight cost: 1+
All models firing at the target as part of this shooting attack gain a bonus to their Ballistic Skill for the duration of the shooting attack. The size of this bonus is equal to the number of markerlight counters expended on this ability. Pinpoint can increase the Ballistic Skill of Snap Shots and Overwatch.

• **Scour:**..... Markerlight cost: 2
All weapons fired at the target as part of this Shooting attack gain the Ignores Cover special rule.

• **Seeker:**..... Markerlight cost: 1+
For each markerlight counter expended on this ability, the unit immediately fires a single seeker missile (if it has one) in addition to any other weapons it is permitted to fire. A seeker missile fired in this way:

- Does not need line of sight.
- Must be fired at the same target as the vehicle's other weapons.
- Is resolved at Ballistic Skill 5.
- Has the Ignores Cover special rule.
- Does not reduce the number of weapons a vehicle can fire at its full Ballistic Skill.
- Does count towards the limit of 2 missiles that a flyer can fire each turn.

HOMING BEACON

Fire caste warriors often carry multi-spectrum homing devices that, when activated, allow the cadre's battlesuit reinforcements to deploy with pinpoint precision.

Friendly units arriving by Deep Strike do not scatter as long as the first model is placed within 6" of a model with a homing beacon.

GRAVITY WAVE PROJECTOR

This projector emits a high powered graviton wave that repulses nearby enemies, slowing their advance to a crawl or halting them in their tracks altogether.

At the start of the enemy Assault phase, nominate an enemy unit within 12" and then roll a D3. If during that Assault phase, the nominated unit attempts to assault the Grav-inhibitor Drone, or its unit, reduce that unit's assault move by the result of the D3 (to a minimum of 0).

MULTI-TRACKER

A multi-tracker assists battlesuit pilots in engaging enemy threats using multiple armaments at once, making them formidable opponents in a wide variety of battle conditions.

A model with a multi-tracker can fire an additional weapon in each Shooting phase.



NETWORKED MARKERLIGHT

These markerlights are networked directly into weapon systems, allowing them to deliver their payload with pinpoint accuracy.

Networked markerlights are a specialised version of the standard markerlight system (see left). When a unit with one or more networked markerlights makes a Shooting attack, the networked markerlights are always fired first. Once the shots from the networked markerlights are resolved, the unit can then fire their other weapons. This means that (unlike other units) they can expend markerlight counters placed from their own networked markerlights in order to benefit their other weapons.

PULSE ACCELERATOR

This device emits a powerful induction field that accelerates the charges of pulse weapons, increasing their range.

All pulse weapons (pg 66) in a unit that contains at least one pulse accelerator, increase their maximum range by 6".

POSITIONAL RELAY

This device records detailed battlefield data and relays it in a tight-band, encrypted burst to assets in orbit, allowing them to better coordinate forces operating in strategic reserve.

Whilst the bearer is within 6" of a board edge, any friendly unit from *Codex: Tau Empire* that arrives from reserve using the Outflank special rule, can choose to move on from that board edge (even if it is your, or your opponent's board edge). Outflanking units that do not choose to arrive from that board edge arrive using the Outflank special rule, as detailed in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

PULSE BOMB GENERATOR

This mechanism produces and contains a ball of incandescent plasma which hangs beneath the bomber, ready to be dropped when a suitable target is reached.

Immediately after the Sun Shark makes a bombing run, roll a D6. On a score of 2+, another pulse bomb is created and the Sun Shark can make another bombing run later in the game. On a roll of a 1, the pulse bomb generator's power fails – no more bombs can be created, and no more bombing runs can therefore be performed.



RIPTIDE SHIELD GENERATOR

Within a Riptide battlesuit's ablative shield is housed a small energy field generator whose potency can be further boosted by diverting power from the XV104's nova reactor.

A Riptide shield generator confers a 5+ invulnerable save.

SHIELD GENERATOR

This generator projects a cohesive energy field capable of protecting the bearer from heavy ordnance and anti-tank weapons fire.

A shield generator confers a 4+ invulnerable Save.

STIMULANT INJECTOR

The battlesuit is fitted with an advanced life-support system that is able to flood the warrior's system with analgesic drugs and life-sustaining stimulants should he become wounded.

A model with a stimulant injector has the Feel No Pain special rule.

TARGET LOCK

Fire Caste infantry who carry markerlights are often equipped with hard-wired target locks that allow them to designate priority targets whilst their squad provides covering fire.

A model with a target lock can shoot at a different target to the rest of his unit.

VECTORED RETRO-THRUSTERS

The warrior's battlesuit is equipped with supplemental thruster nozzles, allowing him a degree of additional manoeuvrability.

A model with vectored retro-thrusters has both the Fleet and Hit & Run special rules.

Models in XV88 Battlesuits cannot be equipped with vectored retro-thrusters.

VELOCITY TRACKER

These advanced motion detecting and heat seeking sensor systems allow pilots to track the movements of airborne targets.

A model with a velocity tracker can choose whether or not to have the Skyfire special rule each time he makes a shooting attack (choose once for all weapons).

ARMOUR

BATTLESUITS

All Tau battlesuits are made of a dense nanocrystalline alloy fashioned into protective armour. This unique alloy has an impact resistant structure and the resultant armours' lightweight compositions allows them to carry more weapon and support systems. Even their shape helps deflect solid shot, while a liquid metal coating reflects medium grade laser fire. In some cases, such as the XV88 Broadside or XV104 Riptide battlesuits, additional nano-layers are added to upgrade the armour's thickness.

The following battlesuits come equipped with multi-trackers (pg 69) and blacksun filters (pg 68). In addition, Stealth battlesuits grant their wearers the Stealth and Shrouded special rules.

BATTLESUIT	ARMOUR SAVE
Stealth	3+
Crisis	3+
Broadside.....	2+
Riptide	2+

COMBAT ARMOUR

Fire Warriors wear standard-issue combat armour on the battlefield. Constructed in two layers, the outer face is hard, ultra-dense nanocrystalline metal veneer bonded to an inner layer of high-performance, thermo-set, molecular polythene.

Combat armour confers a 4+ Armour Save.

KROOT ARMOUR

Little more than battlefield scrap converted into armour plates, Kroot armour offers some protection while still enabling the aliens to utilise their considerable fieldcraft and to easily pick their way through forest and thick cover.

Kroot armour confers a 6+ Armour Save.

RECON ARMOUR

Recon armour is similar to full combat armour, although it lacks some of the segmentations, trading a level of protection for greater movement. Additionally, the nanocular-thread fatigues beneath are interwoven with sound-absorbing fibres to aid in avoiding detection.

Recon armour confers a 5+ Armour Save.



Combat armour

XV25 Stealth battlesuit

XV8 Crisis battlesuit

XV8-05 Crisis 'Enforcer' battlesuit



XV88 Broadside battlesuit

XV104 Riptide battlesuit

XV02 Pilot battlesuit

VEHICLE BATTLE SYSTEMS

AUTOMATED REPAIR SYSTEM

Tiny maintenance drones swarm over damaged systems to repair them in the midst of battle.

At the end of each friendly turn, roll a D6 for each vehicle with an automated repair system that has suffered an immobilised or weapon destroyed result. On the roll of a 6, one Immobilised or Weapon Destroyed result of the owning player's choice is repaired and no longer has any effect. Note, this does not restore any Hull Points.



ADVANCED TARGETING SYSTEM

An advanced targeting system assists the vehicle's gunner by identifying targets of particular value or danger and plotting fire plans to counter them.

If a vehicle has an advanced targeting system, any To Hit roll of a 6 made in the Shooting phase is a Precision Shot.

BLACKSUN FILTER

This optical filtering suite allows vehicle sensors to target enemies at full efficiency and range, even during night fighting operations.

A vehicle equipped with a blacksun filter has the Night Vision special rule.

DECAY LAUNCHERS

Decoy launchers are mounted near the engines of Tau skimmers and fire clouds of reflective strips and tiny emitter drones to protect the vehicle from enemy missiles.

A vehicle with decoy launchers has a 4+ invulnerable save against glancing and penetrating hits caused by weapons with the Interceptor special rule.

DISRUPTION POD

A disruption pod throws out distorting images in both visual and magnetic spectra, making it hard to target the vehicle at range.

A vehicle with a disruption pod has +1 cover save. This means that they have a 6+ cover save even in the open.

FLECHETTE DISCHARGER

Powerful clusters of reactive charges are attached to the hulls of many Tau vehicles. If the enemy approach, they fire off vicious clouds of high velocity flechettes.

During the Initiative 10 step of the Fight sub-phase, any enemy unit with at least one model in base contact with the vehicle suffers a number of Strength 4 AP- hits equal to the number of models it has in base contact with the vehicle.

POINT DEFENCE TARGETING RELAY

Designed to provide superior covering fire for nearby Fire caste units, a point defence relay automatically targets and engages enemies that attempt to assault.

A vehicle with a point defence targeting relay can fire Overwatch, but only with weapons of Strength 5 or less. If the vehicle has any attached drones, they may also fire Overwatch with weapons of Strength 5 or less. In addition, the vehicle has the Supporting Fire special rule.



SENSOR SPINES

Sensor spines are used to feed data to an advanced ground-following flight control system, plotting safe courses through treacherous terrain that avoid traps and mines that might lie hidden from sight.

A vehicle with sensor spines has the Move Through Cover special rule.

DEADLY NEW POWER SOURCE

For many years the Earth caste has been seeking ways to produce ion weaponry usable by the infantry. Previously, in order to generate the high-energy particles that characterize Tau ion weaponry, a powerful generator or small reactor was necessary. Thus, only vehicles or battlesuits were large enough to utilise the potent ion weapons, as only they could carry the bulky power source. Recent developments, however, have produced a new finding – a new alloy was discovered after enriching Iridium far past the point previously thought possible. This highly reactive material was named mor'tonium and, although dangerous, it has proven highly useful.

When exposed to air, the mor'tonium immediately begins to deteriorate, creating a profusion of ion streams that can be

harvested and focused into a beam to fire a highly charged shot. This discovery meant that a heavy generator was no longer needed, allowing for an infantry version of the weapon to immediately go into Earth caste production.

A cylindrical slab of Mor'tonium powers the ion rifle, and its power source can be recharged or overcharged simply by exposing the unstable alloy to the atmosphere. When the alloy has entirely degraded, a new slab can be quickly fitted into the protective housing. While there are issues – the average Fire Warrior's vital functions becoming compromised within a matter of months under the barrage of such intense radiation exposure – the high strength and long range of the ion rifle have made such inherent risks worthwhile. Already the Earth caste is working on higher degrees of protection, although thus far no results have proven cost-effective.

SIGNATURE SYSTEMS

COMMAND AND CONTROL NODE

The Command and Control Node is a sophisticated AI-assisted transmission system that enables a Commander to better direct battlefield operations by linking all Tau targeting computers together. Though the sheer amount of information can seem overwhelming, a Commander who masters the flood of data can better orchestrate the firepower of his forces.

If a model with this wargear does not shoot during the Shooting phase, all Shooting attacks made by other models in his unit re-roll failed To Hit rolls until the end of the current phase. This cannot be used when firing Overwatch. A Command and Control Node can be used at the same time as a Multi-spectrum Sensor Suite.

FAILSAFE DETONATOR

This battlesuit device has been developed to be used only in the direst of circumstances. Intended as the ultimate expression of the doctrine of the Greater Good, when activated, it causes the bearer's battlesuit to self-destruct, buying his team-mates time to withdraw and regroup from overwhelming enemy forces.

If a model with a Failsafe Detonator is slain in the Assault phase, centre the large blast marker over him immediately before removing the model as a casualty. All units, friend and foe, suffer a number of Strength 5 AP- hits equal to the number of models from their unit that are at least partially under the template. Unsaved Wounds inflicted by a Failsafe Detonator count towards determining the assault results.

MULTI-SPECTRUM SENSOR SUITE

Representing the pinnacle of Tau sensor technology, this prototype scans all known spectral bands to locate stealth-cloaked enemies and relay the information back into targeting computers.

If a model with a Multi-spectrum Sensor Suite does not shoot in the Shooting phase, all Shooting attacks made by other models in his unit gain the Ignores Cover special rule until the end of the current phase. This cannot be used when firing Overwatch. A Multi-spectrum Sensor Suite can be used at the same time as a Command and Control Node.

ONAGER GAUNTLET

Onager Gauntlets were first utilised during the Damocles Crusade to keep Crisis teams effective against Imperial Guard armoured companies in extended operations where ammunition reserves were low. So armed, a warrior could punch a hole through the side of a battle tank, but the casualty rate whilst attempting to get close enough to use them was extremely high. Indeed, of the twelve original Onager Gauntlets, only one now remains, recovered from Blackthunder Mesa where Commander Bravestorm's critically damaged battlesuit was surrounded by the smoking wrecks of over a dozen Imperial vehicles.

During the Fight sub-phase, a model with the Onager Gauntlet can opt to substitute all his close combat attacks for a single Strength 10 AP1 attack.

NEUROWEB SYSTEM JAMMER

The Tau seek mastery not only over their own technology, but also over that of other races. To this end, they have created a device capable of broadcasting a jamming field that interferes with enemy weapon systems, causing critical, and sometimes explosive malfunctions.

At the start of each enemy Shooting phase, a model with a Neuroweb System Jammer can use it to target a single enemy unit within 12". All shooting weapons in the target unit gain the Gets Hot special rule until the end of the phase.

PURETIDE ENGRAM NEUROCHIP

Commander Puretide was undoubtedly the most gifted Tau commander of all time. The Tau were unwilling to lose his tactical and strategic brilliance, and upon his death, his mind was scanned and his accumulated memories committed to a massive hologram program on his birth world of Dal'yth. A sliver of that genius has been crafted into a bio-chip. When surgically implanted into the brain of a Fire caste commander, the bearer can access much of the wisdom of Puretide himself, drawing upon a great reservoir of tactical acumen.

At the start of the bearer's Movement phase, choose one of the following special rules: Counter-attack, Furious Charge, Monster Hunter, Stubborn or Tank Hunter. The model with the Puretide Engram Neurochip has that special rule until the start of his next Movement phase.

REPULSOR IMPACT FIELD

The Tau have attempted to reverse engineer the tractor beam technology recovered from Ork wrecks for decades, but their attempts to decipher its workings remain largely futile, due in no small part to the complete lack of logical, uniform construction employed by greenskins. So far, the sum total of Tau ingenuity has only managed to produce a single functioning Repulsor Impact Field, but field testing has proven it to be a devastating weapon, emitting a shock wave of energy that smashes into those nearby with immense force.

At the start of the Fight sub-phase, at the Initiative 10 step, the Repulsor Impact Field inflicts D6 Strength 4 AP- hits on each enemy unit that successfully completed a charge against the bearer, or his unit, this turn.

XV8-02 CRISIS 'IRIDIUM' BATTLESUIT

Following the death of Commander Pridestar to a sniper's bullet and the subsequent rout of Fire caste warriors during the Klodate Worlds Suppression, the Earth caste developed an experimental iridium alloy and produced enough armour plates to reinforce a small series of battlesuits. The XV8-02 prototype offers Fire caste leaders and their bodyguards optimal protection.

A model with an XV8-02 Crisis 'Iridium' Battlesuit has +1 Toughness and an Armour Save of 2+. They otherwise follow all of the rules for XV8 Crisis battlesuits (pg 70).





WARRIORS OF THE GREATER GOOD

The aesthetic, high tech army of the Tau Empire offers rich scope to the collector and painter alike. The variety of battlesuits, armoured warriors, sleek war machines and alien auxiliaries is impressive. Alongside many weapon options and support systems, the Tau Empire presents a host of colour schemes, sept markings and camouflage patterns to choose from.



Many Commanders pilot the latest iteration of the Crisis battlesuit, the XV8-05 Crisis 'Enforcer', which can bear a number of weapons, support systems, and signature systems.



Cadre Fireblade with pulse rifle



Commander Shadowsun in her XV22 Stealth Battlesuit, with MV52 Shield Drone and Command-link Drone



Although he has forsaken the Tau Empire, Farsight still bears the symbol of the Fire caste on his armour.



Commander Farsight wears an XV8 Crisis battlesuit in his own distinctive colours.



Shield generator



The Dawn Blade is a deadly alien artefact.



Darkstrider carries a pulse carbine and the prototype structural analyser.



These members of the mysterious Ethereal caste are carrying a pair of equalizers (left) or an honour blade (right).



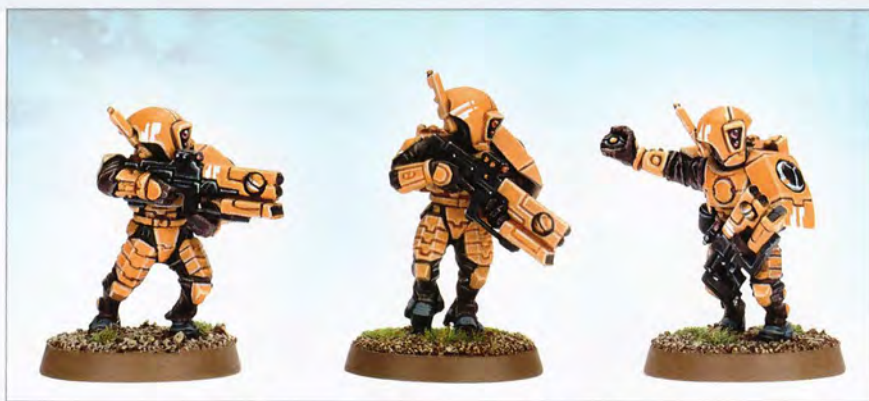
Ethereal Supreme Aun'Va with a member of his Honour Guard



Ethereal Aun'Shi



A Fire Warrior squad leader is known as a shas'ui.



Fire Warriors with pulse carbines



Fire Warriors with pulse rifles



A Fire Warrior team deploys from a Devilfish while an XV104 Riptide provides supporting fire.

FIRE CASTE MARKINGS

SEPT MARKINGS

It is not the colour of their armour that denotes from which Fire caste teams originate, but rather the stripes, applied to weapons and armour. White is the colour for the T'au sept. These markings are the same for all members of a team, and different patterns are used to distinguish different teams of the same type.

FIRE CASTE BADGE

The symbol of the Fire caste is displayed on the armour of all Fire caste warriors, regardless of sept or uniform style.



SQUAD LEADERS

Team leaders are identified by the sept colour applied to their sensor vane and shoulder pad.



BATTLESUITS

On battlesuits, the sept colour reflects a Tau's rank - colour on the sensor vanes for shas'ui, full sept colour helmets for a shas'vre and inverted colours on their helmets for a shas'o.



Shas'ui



Shas'vre



Shas'o



The Crisis battlesuit can bear a number of support systems.



Missile pod



This XV8 Crisis Team is armed with burst cannons and plasma rifles.



Crisis Shas'ui with plasma rifle and missile pod



Crisis Shas'ui with flamer and fusion blaster



The fusion blaster can melt through enemy armour.



Flamer



The standard weapon fit for the XV88 Broadside battlesuit is a twin-linked heavy rail rifle.



Smart missile system



XV88 Broadside Shas'ui equipped with twin-linked high yield missile pod.



Particle accelerator



Seeker missile



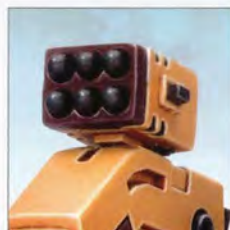
Positioned with a clear field of fire, an XV88 Broadside Team, accompanied by a Shield Drone and Missile Drone, uses its twin-linked heavy rail rifles to bring long-ranged destruction to the foe.



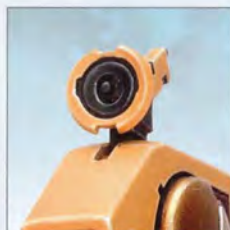
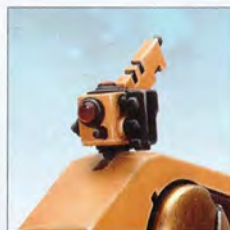
Only Fire Warriors of shas've rank are granted the honour of piloting a Riptide battlesuit.



Fusion blaster



Smart missile system



The Riptide battlesuit can have up to two support systems.



The heavy burst cannon becomes more devastating when fired in the nova-charged mode. Here, twin-linked plasma rifles have been chosen as the XV104 Riptide battlesuit's secondary weapon system.



Riptide shield generator



Panels on each of the Sun Shark's wings open to deploy seeker missiles.



The Sun Shark Bomber is crewed by Air caste pilots and bears the Air caste insignia alongside vehicle designation codes atop its hull.



The Sun Shark Bomber has a pair of detachable Interceptor Drones.



The nose of the Sun Shark Bomber contains a networked markerlight.



The main armament of the Sun Shark Bomber is the deadly pulse bomb generator.



Exemplars of the Greater Good, Pathfinders fight from forward positions and use their markerlights to guide their cadre's firepower to optimal targets.



Pathfinder Shas'ui with pulse carbine



Pathfinder with rail rifle



Pathfinder with pulse carbine



Pathfinder with ion rifle



The Pulse Accelerator Drone boosts the range of pulse weapons.



The Grav-inhibitor Drone is used to slow oncoming foes.



The Recon Drone can mount atop a Devilfish to aid the Pathfinders on their missions.





The standard Piranha armament is a burst cannon.



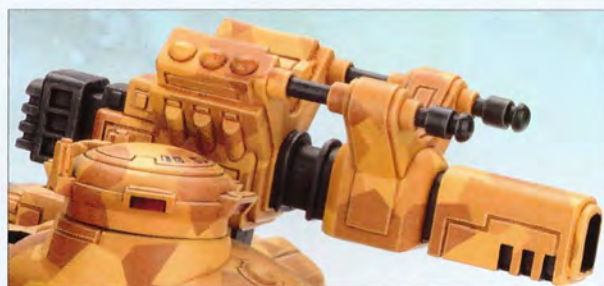
Two Fire caste crew pilot the Piranha.



Piranha light skimmer with fusion blaster and Gun Drones



Famed Hammerhead ace, Longstrike, in his XV02 Pilot Battlesuit.



The main weapon of the Hammerhead gunship is either an ion cannon (above) or a railgun (below)





Smart missile system



The Sky Ray Gunship is armed with six deadly seeker missiles and a pair of networked markerlights.



SA'CEA SEPT

The sept markings for Sa'cea are orange and the standard armour colour of Fire caste warriors is a shade of blue-grey, though some cadres change their armour colour to match their environment. Regardless, sept markings never change.



Fire Warrior with pulse rifle



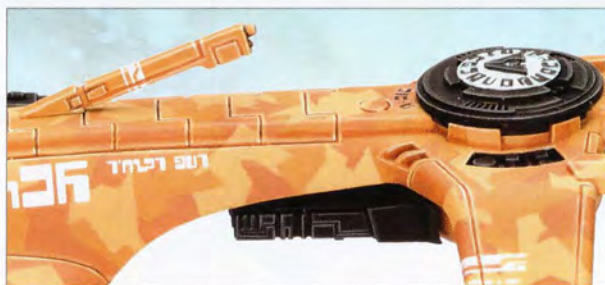
A lighter shade of armour is ideal camouflage for ice worlds.



As marked by his orange sensor vane, this is a shas'ui in an XV25 battlesuit. His darker armour better allows him to blend into the shadows.



The nose-mounted burst cannon is the standard secondary weapon system of the Razorshark Strike Fighter; ideal for strafing runs and air-to-air dogfights.



A side view of the Razorshark's main weapon system – the deadly quad ion turret, which like all ion weapons, can fire in standard or overcharge mode



The Air caste symbol sits atop the vents of the quad ion turret's power source.



The quad ion turret swivels to track ground targets.



The Razorshark's agility is owed to its underslung jet boosters.

BORK'AN SEPT

Whether fighting on a snowbound world, in the midst of an urban campaign or in the foetid swamps of a jungle environment, warriors from Bork'an are always distinguished by their sept markings – the turquoise coloured stripes found on their weapons, helmets and body armour.



Fire Warrior in camouflage for a battle across a snow-covered tundra.



Fire Warrior outfitted for the urban combat of the Mu'gulath Bay campaign.



Pathfinder with rail rifle in uniform colours fit for jungle environs.



Stealth Team Shas'vre with a fusion blaster



Stealth Team Shas'ui with burst cannon



Stealth Team Shas'vre from the Fi'rios sept



The dark grey markings identify this XV25 battlesuit as a member of the Tau'n sept.



Dark colours are the default livery for Stealth Teams, whether in the new XV25 battlesuits or the older mark XV15 suits. The Marker Drone accompanying them bears the same colours and markings.



A typical Sniper Drone Team consists of a Firesight Marksman and three Sniper Drones.



N'DRAS SEPT

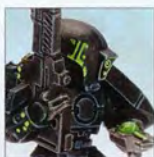
Cadres from the mysterious N'dras sept fight across many battlefields, but can always be identified by their black sept markings.



This camouflage was adopted for battles upon the ocean world of Kvariam Alpha.

The sept colour on the face plate and aerial marks this battlesuit as a shas'vre.

An XV88 Broadside battlesuit prepared for battle in the verdant mists found on the third moon of the N'dras sept world.



The bright green markings label this Fire Warrior as a member of Au'taal sept.

Fire Warrior from the Kel'shan sept



D'yanoi sept is identified by their bright blue sept markings.



Fire Warrior Shas'ui from Fal'shia sept



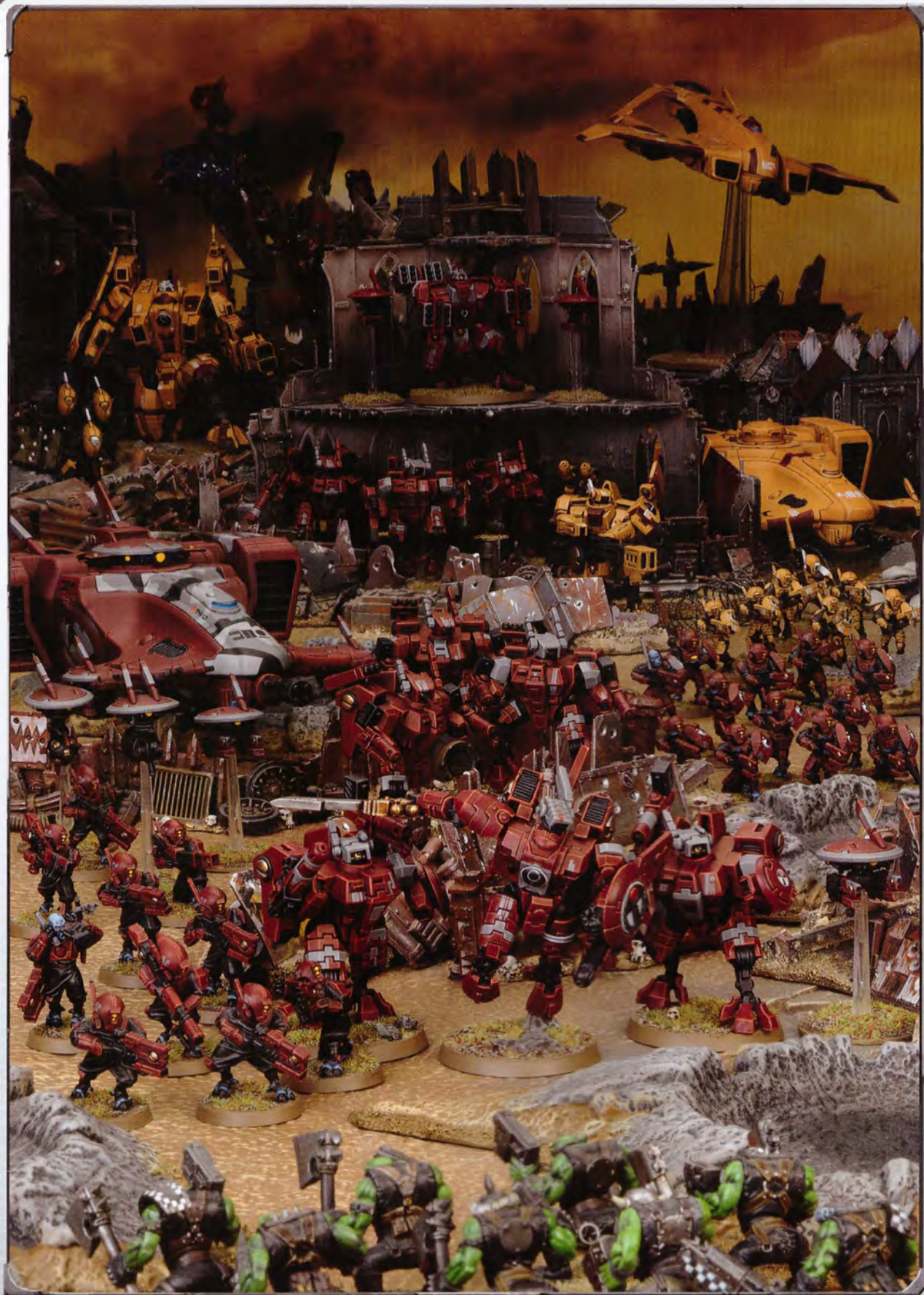
A Pathfinder from T'olku sept



A Pathfinder of Vash'ya sept armoured and equipped for night fighting.



The white markings on his armour and the top of his pulse carbine label this Pathfinder as being from T'au.



Commander Forsight leads the warriors of the Fire caste against his old nemesis, the Orks.

The Kroot do not bear standard sept markings, although some Carnivore Squads daub themselves in warpaint to denote which sept they fight for.



Shaper with Kroot rifle



The Krotox Rider provides heavy support to the Carnivore Squad.



The purple war paint marks this Kroot Warrior and Kroot Hound as fighting for Elsyeir sept.



A Kroot with Viorla sept markings



A Kroot with T'olku sept markings



Vespid Strain Leader with a neutron blaster bearing T'au sept markings.



Vespid are equipped with neutron blasters and combat armour, and these bear the colours and markings of the septs they have joined.





ARMY OF THE THIRD SPHERE

The following army list enables you to field a Tau Empire army and fight battles using the missions included in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

USING THE ARMY LIST

The Tau army list is split into six sections: HQ, troops, dedicated transports, elites, fast attack and heavy support. All of the squads, vehicles and characters in the army are placed into one of these categories depending upon their role on the battlefield. Each model is also given a points value, which varies depending on how effective that model is in battle.

Before you choose an army, you will need to agree with your opponent upon the type of game you are going to play and the maximum total number of points each of you will spend. Then you can proceed to pick your army following the guidelines given in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.

ARMY LIST ENTRIES

Each entry in the army list represents a different unit.

More information about the background and rules for the Tau and their options can be found in the Forces of the Tau Empire section, while examples of the Citadel miniatures you will need to represent them can be found in the Warriors of the Greater Good section.



FIRE WARRIOR TEAM 1										1 54 POINTS			
2		WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv	3 Unit Type	4 Unit Composition	Page
	Fire Warrior	2	3	3	3	1	2	1	7	4+	Infantry	6 Fire Warriors	37
	Fire Warrior Shas'ui	2	3	3	3	1	2	2	8	4+	Infantry (Character)		

5 Wargear:

- Combat armour
- Pulse rifle
- Photon grenades

6 Special Rules:

- Supporting Fire

7 Options:

- May include up to six additional Fire Warriors..... 9 pts/model
- Any model may exchange his pulse rifle for a pulse carbine.....free
- May upgrade one Fire Warrior to a Fire Warrior Shas'ui..... 10 pts
- A Fire Warrior Shas'ui may take a Markerlight and target lock..... 15 pts
- A Fire Warrior Shas'ui may take up to two drones from the **Drones** list.
- The unit may take EMP grenades..... 2 pts/model
- The unit may take a Devilfish as a **Dedicated Transport** (see below).
- The entire unit may take the Bonding Knife Ritual special rule..... 1 pt/model

Each unit entry in the Tau Empire army list contains the following information:

- Unit Name:** At the start of each army list entry you will find the name of the unit alongside the points cost of the unit without any upgrades.
- Unit Profile:** This section will show the profile of any models the unit can include, even if they are upgrades.
- Unit Type:** This refers to the unit type rules in the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook. For example, a unit may be classed as Infantry, Cavalry or vehicle, which will subject it to a number of rules regarding movement, shooting, assaults, etc.
- Unit Composition:** Where applicable, this section will show the number and type of models that make up the basic unit, before any upgrades are taken. If the Unit Composition includes the word 'Unique', then you may only include one of this unit in your army.
- Wargear:** This section details the weapons and equipment the models in the unit are armed with. The cost for all these models and their equipment is included in the points cost listed next to the unit name.

- Special Rules:** Any special rules that apply to the models in the unit are listed here. These special rules are explained in further detail in either the Forces of the Tau Empire section of this book or the Special Rules section of the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook.
- Options:** This section lists all of the upgrades you may add to the unit if you wish to do so, alongside the associated points cost for each. Where an option states that you may exchange one weapon 'and/or' another, you may replace either or both, provided you pay the points cost for each. The abbreviation 'pts' stands for 'points' and 'pts/model' stands for 'points per model'.

Dedicated Transport: Where applicable, this option lists any Transports the unit may take. These have their own army list entries, and do not use up Force Organisation chart selections, but otherwise function as separate units. The Transports section of the *Warhammer 40,000* rulebook explains how Dedicated Transports work.

Warlord Traits: Sometimes an entry will have a specific Warlord Trait, in which case it will be listed here in its army list entry.

Signature Systems: Some entries have unique Signature Systems, listed here. These, like wargear, are already included in the unit's points cost.

TAU EMPIRE WARGEAR LIST

These lists detail the points values of various items of wargear available to units in your army. Many unit entries in the army list that follows may include wargear options from one or more of these lists – in each instance, the army list entry will tell you (in bold) exactly which of these lists you may use.

Ranged Weapons.....Page 65

Where a weapon has two points costs, the first is for a standard, single version, and the second is for two weapons (counting as a twin-linked weapon of that type). A twin-linked weapon counts as two choices from this list.

- Flamer 5/10 pts
- Burst cannon 10/15 pts
- Airbursting fragmentation projector* 15 pts
- Cyclic ion blaster* 15 pts
- Fusion blaster 15/20 pts
- Missile pod 15/20 pts
- Plasma rifle 15/20 pts

**These rare prototypes may only be taken once per detachment.*

Signature Systems.....Page 73

Only one of each Signature System may be taken per army.

- Neuroweb System Jammer 2 pts
- Onager Gauntlet 5 pts
- Failsafe Detonator 10 pts
- Repulsor Impact Field 10 pts
- Command and Control Node 15 pts
- Purity Engram Neurochip 15 pts
- Multi-spectrum Sensor Suite 20 pts
- XV8-02 Crisis 'Iridium' Battlesuit 25 pts

DRONES

PAGE 33

- Gun drone 12 pts
- Marker drone 12 pts
- Missile drone 12 pts
- Shield drone 12 pts

Support Systems.....Page 68

Where a support system has two points costs, the second is for a Riptide Shas'vre, and the first is for any other battlesuit.

- Advanced targeting system 3 pts
- Counterfire defence system 5 pts
- Early warning override 5 pts
- Positional relay 5 pts
- Target lock 5 pts
- Vectored retro-thrusters^{1,2} 5 pts
- Drone controller 8 pts
- Stimulant injector 15/35 pts
- Velocity tracker 20 pts
- Shield generator² 25 pts

1. May not be taken by models in Broadside battlesuits.

2. May not be taken by models in Riptide battlesuits.

VEHICLE BATTLE SYSTEMS

PAGE 72

- Blacksun filter 1 pts
- Decoy launchers 3 pts
- Automated repair system 5 pts
- Sensor spines 5 pts
- Flechette discharger 10 pts
- Point defence targeting relay 10 pts
- Advanced targeting system 10 pts
- Disruption pod 15 pts



HQ

COMMANDER FARSIGHT

165 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv	Unit Type	Unit Composition	Page
Commander Farsight	5	5	5	4	4	5	4	10	3+	Jet Pack Infantry (Character)	1 (Unique)	57

Wargear:

- Crisis battlesuit
- Plasma rifle
- Shield generator

Signature System:

- The Dawn Blade

Warlord Trait:

- Through Boldness, Victory

Special Rules:

- Independent Character
- Preferred Enemy (Orks)
- Supporting Fire
- Very Bulky

Farsight Enclave:

If Commander Farsight is accompanied by an XV8 Crisis Bodyguard Team, it may include up to 7 Crisis Bodyguards.

COMMANDER SHADOWSUN

135 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv	Unit Type	Unit Composition	Page
Commander Shadowsun	4	5	4	3	3	4	4	10	3+	Jet Pack Infantry (Character)	1 (Unique)	59
Command-link Drone	2	2	3	4	1	4	1	7	4+	Jet Pack Infantry (Drone)		
MV52 Shield Drone	2	2	3	4	1	4	1	7	4+	Jet Pack Infantry (Drone)		

Wargear (Shadowsun):

- Two fusion blasters
- Advanced targeting system

Signature System (Shadowsun):

- XV22 Stealth Battlesuit

Warlord Trait:

- A Ghost Who Walks Among Us

Special Rules (Shadowsun):

- Defender of the Greater Good
- Independent Character
- Infiltrate
- Supporting Fire

Wargear (Drones):

- Command-link
(Command-link Drone only)
- MV52 shield generator
(MV52 Shield Drone only)

Options:

- May take a single
Command-link Drone 20 pts
- May take up to two
MV52 Shield Drones 20 pts/model



AUN'VA

100 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv	Unit Type	Unit Composition	Page
Aun'Va	1	3	2	3	4	1	1	10	5+	Infantry (Character)	1 (Unique)	60
Ethereal Guard	4	4	3	3	2	3	3	10	5+	Infantry	2 Ethereal Guards	

Wargear (Aun'Va):

- Recon armour

Signature System (Aun'Va):

- The Paradox of Duality

Warlord Trait (Aun'Va):

- Exemplar of the
Selfless Cause

Special Rules (Aun'Va):

- Bonding Knife Ritual
- Failure is Not An Option
- Great Invocation
- Invocation of the Elements
- Stubborn
- Supreme Loyalty
- Very Bulky

Wargear (Ethereal Guards):

- Recon armour
- Honour blades
- Photon grenades

Special Rules (Ethereal Guards):

- Bonding Knife Ritual
- Stubborn

HQ

AUN'SHI

110 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv	Unit Type	Unit Composition	Page
Aun'Shi	5	3	3	3	3	5	4	10	-	Infantry (Character)	1 (Unique)	64

Wargear:

- Honour blade
- EMP grenades
- Photon grenades
- Shield generator

Special Rules:

- Blademaster
- Failure is Not An Option
- Independent Character
- Invocation of the Elements
- Stubborn



DARKSTRIDER

100 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv	Unit Type	Unit Composition	Page
Darkstrider	4	5	3	3	3	3	3	9	5+	Infantry (Character)	1 (Unique)	63

Wargear:

- Recon armour
- Pulse carbine
- Photon grenades
- Blacksun filter
- Markerlight

Special Rules:

- Fight on Foot
- Fighting Retreat
- Independent Character
- Outflank
- Scouts
- Supporting Fire



Signature System:

- Structural Analyser

ETHEREAL

50 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv	Unit Type	Unit Composition	Page
Ethereal	4	3	3	3	2	3	3	10	-	Infantry (Character)	1 Ethereal	35

Special Rules:

- Failure is Not An Option
- Independent Character
- Invocation of the Elements
- Stubborn

Options:

- May take one of the following:
 - Honour blade 5 pts
 - Two equalisers..... 10 pts
- May take:
 - Blacksun filter..... 5 pts
 - Homing beacon 5 pts
- May take up to two drones from the **Drones** list.

CADRE FIREBLADE

60 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv	Unit Type	Unit Composition	Page
Cadre Fireblade	4	5	3	3	3	3	3	9	4+	Infantry (Character)	1 Cadre Fireblade	36

Wargear:

- Combat armour
- Pulse rifle
- Photon grenades
- Markerlight

Special Rules:

- Independent Character
- Split Fire
- Supporting Fire
- Volley Fire

Options:

- May take up to two drones from the **Drones** list.

HQ

COMMANDER

85 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv	Unit Type	Unit Composition	Page
Commander	4	5	5	4	4	3	4	10	3+	Jet Pack Infantry (Character)	1 Commander	34

Wargear:

- Crisis battlesuit

Special Rules:

- Independent Character
- Supporting Fire
- Very Bulky

Options:

- May take up to four items from the **Ranged Weapons** and/or **Support Systems** lists.
- May take items from the **Signature Systems** list.
- May take up to two drones from the **Drones** list.

XVB CRISIS BODYGUARD TEAM

32 POINTS

For each Commander in your army (including Commander Farsight and Commander Shadowsun), you may include one XVB Crisis Bodyguard Team. This unit does not take up a Force Organisation slot.

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv	Unit Type	Unit Composition	Page
Crisis Bodyguard	2	3	5	4	2	2	3	9	3+	Jet Pack Infantry	1 Crisis Bodyguard	41

Wargear:

- Crisis battlesuit

Special Rules:

- Supporting Fire
- Sworn Protector
- Very Bulky

Options:

- May include one additional Crisis Bodyguard 32 pts
- Any Crisis Bodyguard may take up to three items from the **Support Systems** and/or **Ranged Weapons** lists.
- Any Crisis Bodyguard may take items from the **Signature Systems** list.
- Any Crisis Bodyguard may take up to two drones from the **Drones** list.
- The entire unit may take the Bonding Knife Ritual special rule 2 pts/model



TROOPS

FIRE WARRIOR TEAM

54 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv	Unit Type	Unit Composition	Page
Fire Warrior	2	3	3	3	1	2	1	7	4+	Infantry	6 Fire Warriors	37
Fire Warrior Shas'ui	2	3	3	3	1	2	2	8	4+	Infantry (Character)		

Wargear:

- Combat armour
- Pulse rifle
- Photon grenades

Special Rules:

- Supporting Fire

Options:

- May include up to six additional Fire Warriors..... 9 pts/model
- Any model may exchange his pulse rifle for a pulse carbine..... free
- May upgrade one Fire Warrior to a Fire Warrior Shas'ui 10 pts
- A Fire Warrior Shas'ui may take a Markerlight and target lock 15 pts
- A Fire Warrior Shas'ui may take up to two drones from the **Drones** list.
- The unit may take EMP grenades 2 pts/model
- The unit may take a Devilfish as a **Dedicated Transport** (see below).
- The entire unit may take the Bonding Knife Ritual special rule 1 pt/model

KROOT CARNIVORE SQUAD

60 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv	Unit Type	Unit Composition	Page
Kroot	4	3	3	3	1	3	1	7	6+	Infantry	10 Kroot	53
Shaper	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	8	6+	Infantry (Character)		
Krootox Rider	4	3	6	3	2	3	2	7	6+	Infantry		
Kroot Hound	4	0	3	3	1	5	2	6	-	Beasts		

Wargear:

- Kroot armour (Kroot, Shaper and Krootox Rider only)
- Kroot rifle with pulse rounds (Kroot and Shaper only)
- Kroot gun (Krootox Rider only)

Special Rules:

- Acute Senses (Kroot Hounds only)
- Bulky (Krootox Rider only)
- Infiltrate
- Move Through Cover
- Stealth (Forests)

Options:

- May include up to ten additional Kroot 6 pts/model
- May include up to three Krootox Riders 25 pts/model
- May include up to ten Kroot Hounds 5 pts/model
- May upgrade one Kroot to a Shaper 15 pts
- A Shaper may exchange his Kroot rifle for either a pulse rifle or a pulse carbine 4 pts
- May upgrade all models with Kroot rifles to take sniper rounds 1 pt/model



DEDICATED TRANSPORT

DEVILFISH

80 POINTS

	┌ Armour ┐					Unit Type	Unit Composition	Page
	BS	F	S	R	HP			
Devilfish	3	12	11	10	3	Vehicle (Tank, Skimmer, Transport)	1 Devilfish	39

Wargear:

- Burst cannon
- Two Gun Drones

Transport Capacity:

- Twelve models. A Devilfish may transport Drones, but may not transport models with the Bulky, Very Bulky or Extremely Bulky special rules.

Options:

- May exchange both Gun Drones for a twin-linked smart missile system..... 10 pts
- May take up to two seeker missiles 8 pts each
- May take items from the **Vehicle Battle Systems** list.

ELITES

XVB CRISIS TEAM

22 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv	Unit Type	Unit Composition	Page
Crisis Shas'ui	2	3	5	4	2	2	2	8	3+	Jet Pack Infantry	1 Crisis Shas'ui	41
Crisis Shas'vre	2	3	5	4	2	2	3	9	3+	Jet Pack Infantry (Character)		

Wargear:

- Crisis battlesuit

Special Rules:

- Supporting Fire
- Very Bulky

Options:

- May include up to two additional Crisis Shas'ui 22 pts/model
- Any Crisis Shas'ui may take up to three items from the **Ranged Weapons** and/or **Support Systems** lists.
- May upgrade one Crisis Shas'ui to a Crisis Shas'vre 10 pts
- A Crisis Shas'vre may take up to three items from the **Ranged Weapons**, **Signature Systems** and/or **Support Systems** lists.
- Any Crisis Shas'ui or Crisis Shas'vre may take up to two drones from the **Drones** list.
- The entire unit may take the Bonding Knife Ritual special rule 1 pt/model

STEALTH TEAM

90 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv	Unit Type	Unit Composition	Page
Stealth Shas'ui	2	3	4	3	1	2	2	8	3+	Jet Pack Infantry	3 Stealth Shas'ui	43
Stealth Shas'vre	2	3	4	3	1	2	3	9	3+	Jet Pack Infantry (Character)		

Wargear:

- Stealth battlesuit
- Burst cannon

Special Rules:

- Infiltrate
- Supporting Fire

Options:

- May include up to three additional Stealth Shas'ui 30 pts/model
- Any Stealth Shas'ui may take a single item from the **Support Systems** list.
- For every three models in the unit (excluding drones), one may replace his burst cannon with a fusion blaster 5 pts/model
- May upgrade one Stealth Shas'ui to a Stealth Shas'vre 10 pts
- A Stealth Shas'vre may take up to one item from the **Support Systems** list.
- A Stealth Shas'vre may take:
 - Homing beacon 10 pts
 - Markerlight and target lock 5 pts
- A Stealth Shas'vre may take up to two drones from the **Drones** list.
- The entire unit may take the Bonding Knife Ritual special rule 1 pt/model



XV104 RIPTIDE

180 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv	Unit Type	Unit Composition	Page
Riptide Shas'vre	2	3	6	6	5	2	3	9	2+	Jet Pack Monstrous Creature	1 Riptide Shas'vre	45
Shielded Missile Drone	2	2	4	6	1	4	1	7	4+	Jet Pack Infantry (Drone)		

Wargear (Riptide Shas'vre):

- Riptide battlesuit
- Heavy burst cannon
- Twin-linked smart missile system
- Riptide shield generator

Wargear (Shielded Missile Drone):

- Missile pod
- Shield generator

Special Rules:

- Nova Reactor (Riptide Shas'vre only)
- Supporting Fire

Options:

- May exchange twin-linked smart missile system for one of the following:
 - Twin-linked plasma rifle free
 - Twin-linked fusion blaster free
- May exchange heavy burst cannon for ion accelerator 5 pts
- May take up to two Shielded Missile Drones 25 pts/model
- May take up to two items from the **Support Systems** list.

FAST ATTACK

PATHFINDER TEAM

44 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv	Unit Type	Unit Composition	Page
Pathfinder	2	3	3	3	1	2	1	7	5+	Infantry	4 Pathfinders	38
Pathfinder Shas'ui	2	3	3	3	1	2	2	8	5+	Infantry (Character)		
Recon Drone	2	2	3	4	2	4	1	7	4+	Jet Pack Infantry (Drone)		
Grav-inhibitor Drone	2	2	3	4	1	4	1	7	4+	Jet Pack Infantry (Drone)		
Pulse Accelerator Drone	2	3	3	4	1	4	1	7	4+	Jet Pack Infantry (Drone)		

Wargear:

- Recon armour
- Pulse carbine
- Photon grenades
- Markerlight

Special Rules:

- Scouts
- Supporting Fire

Options:

- May include up to six additional Pathfinders 11 pts/model
- May include a Recon Drone 28 pts
- May include a Grav-inhibitor Drone 15 pts
- May include a Pulse Accelerator Drone 15 pts
- Up to three models may exchange their pulse carbine and markerlight for one of the following:
 - Ion rifle 10 pts/model
 - Rail rifle 15 pts/model
- The unit may take EMP grenades 2 pts/model

- May upgrade one Pathfinder to a Pathfinder Shas'ui 10 pts
- A Pathfinder Shas'ui may take a blacksun filter 1 pt
- A Pathfinder Shas'ui may take up to two drones from the Drones list.
- The entire unit may take the Bonding Knife Ritual special rule 1 pt/model
- A Pathfinder Team may take a Devilfish as a **Dedicated Transport** (pg 99).

VESPID STINGWINGS

72 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv	Unit Type	Unit Composition	Page
Vespid Stingwing	3	3	3	4	1	6	1	6	4+	Jump Infantry	4 Vespid Stingwings	54
Vespid Strain Leader	3	3	3	4	1	6	2	9	4+	Jump Infantry (Character)		

Wargear:

- Combat armour
- Neutron blaster

Special Rules:

- Fleet
- Hit & Run
- Move Through Cover
- Stealth (Ruins)

Options:

- May include up to eight additional Vespid Stingwings 18 pts/model
- May upgrade one Vespid Stingwing to a Vespid Strain Leader.. 10 pts

DRONE SQUADRON

56 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv	Unit Type	Unit Composition	Page
Gun Drone	2	2	3	4	1	4	1	7	4+	Jet Pack Infantry (Drone)	4 Gun Drones	55
Marker Drone	2	2	3	4	1	4	1	7	4+	Jet Pack Infantry (Drone)		
Shield Drone	2	2	3	4	1	4	1	7	4+	Jet Pack Infantry (Drone)		

Wargear:

- Twin-linked pulse carbine (Gun Drone only)
- Markerlight (Marker Drone only)
- Shield generator (Shield Drone only)

Special Rules:

- Supporting Fire

Options:

- May include up to eight additional Gun Drones 14 pts/model
- May upgrade any Gun Drone to:
 - Marker Drone free
 - Shield Drone free

PIRANHAS

40 POINTS

	Armour					Unit Type	Unit Composition	Page
	BS	F	S	R	HP			
Piranha	3	11	10	10	2	Vehicle (Skimmer, Fast, Open-topped)	1 Piranha	47

Wargear:

- Burst cannon
- Two Gun Drones

Options:

- May include up to four additional Piranhas 40 pts/model
- Any Piranha may take up to two seeker missiles 8 pts each
- Any Piranha may exchange its burst cannon for a fusion blaster 10 pts/model
- Any Piranha may take items from the **Vehicle Battle Systems** list.

FAST ATTACK

SUN SHARK BOMBER

160 POINTS

	[Armour]									
	BS	F	S	R	HP					
Sun Shark Bomber	3	11	10	10	3					
	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv	
Interceptor Drone	2	2	3	4	1	4	1	7	4+	

Unit Type
Vehicle (Flyer)

Unit Composition
1 Sun Shark Bomber

Page
48

Jet Pack Infantry (Drone) 2 Interceptor Drones

Wargear (Sun Shark Bomber):

- Pulse bomb generator
- Missile pod
- Networked markerlight
- Two seeker missiles

Wargear (Interceptor Drone):

- Twin-linked ion rifle

Special Rules (Interceptor Drone):

- Afterburners
- High Velocity Deployment
- Interceptor
- Skyfire
- Supporting Fire

Options:

- May upgrade missile pod to a twin-linked missile pod .. 5 pts
- May take items from the **Vehicle Battle Systems** list.

RAZORSHARK STRIKE FIGHTER

145 POINTS

	[Armour]									
	BS	F	S	R	HP					
Razorshark Strike Fighter	3	11	10	10	3					

Unit Type
Vehicle (Flyer)

Unit Composition
1 Razorshark Strike Fighter

Page
49

Wargear:

- Burst cannon
- Two seeker missiles
- Quad ion turret

Options:

- May exchange burst cannon for a missile pod 5 pts
- May take items from the **Vehicle Battle Systems** list.



HEAVY SUPPORT

XVBB BROADSIDE TEAM

65 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv	Unit Type	Unit Composition	Page
Broadside Shas'ui	2	3	5	4	2	2	2	8	2+	Infantry	1 Broadside Shas'ui	42
Broadside Shas'vre	2	3	5	4	2	2	3	9	2+	Infantry (Character)		

Wargear:

- Broadside battlesuit
- Twin-linked heavy rail rifle
- Twin-linked smart missile system

Special Rules:

- Extremely Bulky
- Supporting Fire

Options:

- May include up to two additional Broadside Shas'ui..... 65 pts/model
- May upgrade one Broadside Shas'ui to a Broadside Shas'vre..... 10 pts
- Any Broadside Shas'ui or Shas'vre may exchange his twin-linked heavy rail rifle for a twin-linked high-yield missile pod free
- Any Broadside Shas'ui or Shas'vre may exchange his twin-linked smart missile system for twin-linked plasma rifles 5 pts
- Any Broadside Shas'ui or Shas'vre may take a seeker missile 8 pts/model
- Any Broadside Shas'ui or Shas'vre may take up to one item from the **Support Systems** list.
- Any Broadside Shas'ui or Shas'vre may take up to two drones from the **Drones** list.
- The entire unit may take the Bonding Knife Ritual special rule 1 pt/model

HAMMERHEAD GUNSHIP

125 POINTS

	┌ Armour ┐					Unit Type	Unit Composition	Page
	BS	F	S	R	HP			
Hammerhead Gunship	4	13	12	10	3	Vehicle (Tank, Skimmer)	1 Hammerhead	50

Wargear:

- Railgun with solid shot
- Two Gun Drones

Options:

- Railgun may take submunition rounds..... 5 pts
- May exchange both Gun Drones for one of the following:
 - twin-linked burst cannon free
 - twin-linked smart missile system free
- May take up to two seeker missiles 8 pts each
- May exchange railgun for an ion cannon free
- May take items from the **Vehicle Battle Systems** list.

LONGSTRIKE

45 POINTS

One Hammerhead Gunship in the army may be upgraded to include Commander Longstrike (pg 62). Use the Longstrike model to represent which Hammerhead he is commanding.

Signature System:

XV02 Pilot Battlesuit

Special Rules:

- Hammerhead Ace
- Preferred Enemy (Imperial Guard)
- Tank Hunters

SKY RAY MISSILE DEFENCE GUNSHIP

115 POINTS

	┌ Armour ┐					Unit Type	Unit Composition	Page
	BS	F	S	R	HP			
Sky Ray	4	13	12	10	3	Vehicle (Tank, Skimmer)	1 Sky Ray	51

Wargear:

- Six seeker missiles
- Two Gun Drones
- Two networked markerlights
- Velocity tracker

Options:

- May exchange both Gun Drones for one of the following:
 - Twin-linked burst cannon free
 - Twin-linked smart missile system free
- May take items from the **Vehicle Battle Systems** list.

SNIPER DRONE TEAM

58 POINTS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv	Unit Type	Unit Composition	Page
Firesight Marksman	2	5	3	3	1	2	1	7	4+	Infantry	1 Firesight Marksman	46
Sniper Drone	2	2	3	4	1	4	1	7	4+	Jet Pack Infantry (Drone)	3 Sniper Drones	

Wargear (Firesight Marksman):

- Combat armour
- Pulse pistol
- Drone controller
- Markerlight

Wargear (Sniper Drone):

- Longshot pulse rifle

Special Rules:

- Stealth
- Supporting Fire

Options:

- May include up to two additional Firesight Marksmen 13 pts/model
- May include up to six additional Sniper Drones 15 pts/model

REFERENCE

All of the rules and tables here are condensed for ease of reference. If you need the full rule, see its entry in the main pages of the book.

ARMY SPECIAL RULES (PG 32)

Bonding Knife Ritual: A unit with this special rule always tests to regroup on its unmodified Leadership.

Supporting Fire: When an enemy charges, all friendly models with this special rule in units within 6" of the unit being charged can choose to fire Overwatch.



D6 WARLORD TRAIT

- 1 **Precision of the Skilled Hunter.** Enemies cannot take Look Out, Sir rolls against Warlord's shooting attacks. Re-roll if Warlord has no ranged weapon.
- 2 **Through Unity, Devastation.** One use only. For the duration of one of your Shooting phases, all friendly Tau Empire units within 12" of the Warlord re-roll To Hit rolls of 1.
- 3 **A Ghost Who Walks Amongst Us.** The Warlord, and his unit, move 3D6" for Jet Pack Thrust Moves. Re-roll if your Warlord doesn't have a jet pack.
- 4 **Exemplar of the Selfless Cause.** One use only. Use this ability at the start of a Movement phase. All friendly Tau Empire units that have gone to ground can move, shoot and charge normally this turn.
- 5 **Predator of the Skies.** One use only. Use this ability at the start of a Shooting phase. The Warlord, and his unit, have Skyfire that phase.
- 6 **Through Boldness, Victory.** Your Warlord, and his unit, do not scatter when Deep Striking. Re-roll if your Warlord cannot Deep Strike.

SPECIAL RULES

Afterburners (pg 48): Can Turbo-boost like Jetbikes.

Blademaster (pg 64): When in a challenge, Aun'Shi must choose a fighting stance – Patient Blade or Killing Blade – each turn, before any rolls.

- *Patient Blade:* re-roll all failed saving throws that phase.
- *Killing Blade:* Rending for that phase.

Defender of the Greater Good (pg 59): Stealth Shas'ui and Shas'vre models in Shadowsun's unit have Sworn Protector.

Failure is Not An Option (pg 35): All friendly Tau Empire models within 12" use the Ethereal's Ld for Fear, Morale, Pinning and Regroup tests. A slain Ethereal is worth an extra Victory Point.

Fight on Foot (pg 63): Can only join Fire Warriors or Pathfinders.

Fighting Retreat (pg 63): Darkstrider and unit Consolidate after firing Overwatch.

Great Invocation (pg 60): Aun'Va invokes two elemental powers per turn.

Hammerhead Ace (pg 62): Longstrike's Hammerhead is BS 5. Longstrike also dies if his Hammerhead is destroyed, but provides no additional Victory Points.

High Velocity Deployment (pg 48): Can disembark during its move even if Zooming. A Sun Shark Bomber that moves before its drones disembark can continue its move immediately after they disembark.

Invocation of the Elements (pg 35):

At the start of each Movement phase, choose one of the four elemental powers. The Ethereal, and all friendly non-vehicle Tau Empire models within 12" benefit from the power until the start of the Ethereal's next Movement phase. If the Ethereal is slain, the power ends.

- *Calm of Tides:* Stubborn.
- *Storm of Fire:* Fire an extra shot with pulse weapons (pg 66) when target is within half range. This affects Kroot pulse rounds but not pulse bombs.
- *Sense of Stone:* Feel No Pain (6+).
- *Zephyr's Grace:* Fire Snap Shots after running.

Nova Reactor (pg 45): Declare an attempt to use the reactor at the start of each of its Movement phases. If using the reactor, roll a D6. On a 1-2, the Riptide fails and suffers a Wound (no saves allowed). On 3+, you can choose an ability listed below to have (until the start of your next Movement phase).

Action	Effect
<i>Nova Shield</i>	3+ invulnerable save.
<i>Boost</i>	Rolls 4D6 for Thrust Moves.
<i>Ripple Fire</i>	Fire twin-linked fusion blaster, twin-linked plasma rifle, or twin-linked SMS twice.
<i>Nova-charge</i>	Can use Nova-charge profile on weapons.

Supreme Loyalty (pg 60): While Aun'Va is alive, Tau Empire models re-roll failed Fear, Morale, Pinning and Regroup tests.

Sworn Protector (pg 41): An Independent Character in a unit with a model with this special rule automatically passes Look Out, Sir attempts.

Target Acquired (pg 68): Markerlights cannot cause Wounds and saves cannot be taken against them; for each hit, place a counter next to the target. Before a unit shoots, if their target has any markerlight counters next to it, the unit can choose to use a markerlight ability (either Pinpoint, Scour or Seeker) by removing the appropriate number of counters. Units cannot use counters from their own markerlights.

- **Pinpoint** (Markerlight cost = 1+): +1 BS per counter used.
- **Scour** (Markerlight cost = 2): Ignores Cover.
- **Seeker** (Markerlight cost = 1+): Fire 1 seeker missile per counter used.

Turret Mounting (pg 38): Recon Drones embark on Devilfish exactly like an embarked passenger, but do not count towards Transport Capacity. When so embarked, the Devilfish has a homing beacon and positional relay.

Volley Fire (pg 36): If this model, and his unit, do not move in the Movement phase, their pulse rifles and carbines fire an additional shot in the Shooting phase.

SUPPORT SYSTEMS (SEE PAGES 68-69 UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.)

Advanced Targeting System: To Hit roll of a 6 in Shooting phase are **Precision Shots**. Characters make Precision Shots on 5 or 6.

Blacksun Filter: Night Vision and immune to Blind.

Command-link (pg 59): One unit within 12" re-rolls To Hit rolls of 1 for that friendly Shooting phase.

Counterfire Defence System: Overwatch at BS 2.

Drone Controller: Drones in the unit use the bearer's BS.

Early Warning Override: Interceptor.

Homing Beacon: Deep Striking friendly units do not scatter when placed within 6" of a homing beacon.

Gravity Wave Projector: At the start of the enemy Assault phase, **nominate** an enemy unit within 12". If that unit **attempts to charge** the drone or its unit, decrease its charge range by D3".

Multi-Tracker: Fire an extra weapon each Shooting phase

MV52 Shield Generator (pg 59): 3+ invulnerable save.

Networked Markerlight: A markerlight that is always fired first and whose counters can be used by its own unit.

Pulse Accelerator: All pulse weapons in a unit with a pulse accelerator, increase their range by 6".

Positional Relay: Whilst the bearer is within 6" of a board edge, any Outflanking friendly Tau Empire unit can choose to move on from that board edge.

Pulse Bomb Generator: After a bombing run, roll a D6. On 2+, another pulse bomb is created. On a 1, no more bombs can be created.

Riptide Shield Generator: 5+ invulnerable save.

Shield Generator: 4+ invulnerable Save.

Stimulant Injector: Feel No Pain.

Target Lock: Can shoot at a different target than his unit.

Vectored Retro-thrusters: Fleet and Hit & Run. Cannot be used by BroadSides.

Velocity Tracker: Choose to have Skyfire, or not, each time it makes a shooting attack (choose once for all weapons).



SIGNATURE SYSTEMS (SEE PAGE 73 UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.)

Command and Control Node: If this model does not shoot in the Shooting phase, all Shooting attacks made by other models in his unit re-roll failed To Hit rolls that phase. This cannot be used when firing Overwatch, but can be used at the same time as a Multi-spectrum Sensor Suite.

The Dawn Blade (pg 57):

Range	S	AP	Type
-	User	2	Melee, Armourbane

Failsafe Detonator: If this model dies in the Assault phase, centre the large blast marker over him immediately before removing him. All units suffer a number of S5 AP- hits equal to the number of models from their unit under the template.

Multi-spectrum Sensor Suite: If this model does not shoot in the Shooting phase, all Shooting attacks made by other models in his unit have Ignores Cover this phase. This cannot be used when firing Overwatch, but can be used at the same time as a Command and Control Node.

Neuroweb System Jammer: At the start of each enemy Shooting phase, this model can target a single enemy unit in 12". All shooting weapons in the target unit have Gets Hot that phase.

Onager Gauntlet: In the Fight sub-phase, this model can opt to substitute all his close combat attacks for a S10 AP1 attack.

Paradox of Duality (pg 61): For every unsaved Wound Aun'Va's unit suffers, roll a D6. If the roll is equal to or higher than the AP of the shot, the Wound is ignored. AP1 Wounds are automatically ignored and rolls cannot be made against AP- Wounds.

Puretide Engram Neurochip: At the start of your Movement phase, choose a special rule: Counter-attack, Furious Charge, Monster Hunter, Stubborn or Tank Hunters. This model has that rule until his next Movement phase.

Repulsor Impact Field: At the Initiative 10 step, this item inflicts D6 S4 AP- hits on each enemy unit that charge the bearer, or his unit, this turn.

Structural Analyser (pg 63): Non-vehicle targets of Darkstrider or his unit's shooting attacks have -1 Toughness against those shots. Their modified Toughness is used for Instant Death.

XV02 Pilot Battlesuit (pg 62): Supporting Fire, blacksun filter. Longstrike's Hammerhead can fire Overwatch once at each eligible charging unit.

XV22 Stealth Battlesuit (pg 59): 3+ Armour Save, 5+ invulnerable save, Stealth, Shrouded, multi-tracker, blacksun filter, Shadowsun can fire her fusion blasters at two different targets, though one must be at the same target as her unit, if she has joined one.

XV8-02 Crisis 'Iridium' Battlesuit: +1 Toughness and 2+ Armour Save.

ARMOUR (PG 70)

Battlesuits: The following battlesuits have multi-trackers and blacksun filters. Stealth battlesuits also have Stealth and Shrouded.

Battlesuit	Armour Save
Stealth	3+
Crisis	3+
Broadside	2+
Riptide	2+

Combat Armour: 4+ Armour Save.

Kroot Armour: 6+ Armour Save.

Recon Armour: 5+ Armour Save.

DRONES (PG 33)

A unit of drones is a non-scoring, non-denial unit. Drones do not have the Bulky special rule.

UNIT UPGRADE DRONES

Drones taken as upgrades for a unit act as additional squad members in all regards, but they cannot purchase options.

Independent Characters and Drones:

Independent Characters with drones can join units. If the Independent Character leaves the unit, his drones leave with him. If the Independent Character is killed while part of a unit, his drones become

part of that unit; the Independent Character's unit has, for the purposes of Victory Points, been destroyed. If the Independent Character is killed while not in a unit, the surviving drones remain and the unit is not destroyed. The drones can no longer join units.

VEHICLE DRONES

Attached Drones: Whilst attached to the vehicle, drones are embarked passengers (that don't take up Transport Capacity). While attached, they can shoot as passengers using their location for line of sight, range etc., but must shoot at the same target as the vehicle. If a vehicle is destroyed with attached drones, the drones are destroyed too.

Detaching Drones: During friendly Movement phases, drones may detach like Infantry disembarking an Open-topped Transport. All drones from a unit must detach together.

Drones cannot re-attach, but can later embark in the same way as other drones.

Drones that start attached to a vehicle do not award Victory Points when destroyed and only the vehicle needs to be destroyed to get its Victory Points.



VEHICLE BATTLE SYSTEMS (PG 72)

Automated Repair System: At the end of each friendly turn, roll a D6 for each vehicle with an automated repair system that has suffered an Immobilised or Weapon Destroyed result. On a 6, one such result is repaired. Doesn't repair Hull Points.

Advanced Targeting System: To Hit roll of a 6 in Shooting phase are Precision Shots.

Blacksun Filter: Night Vision.

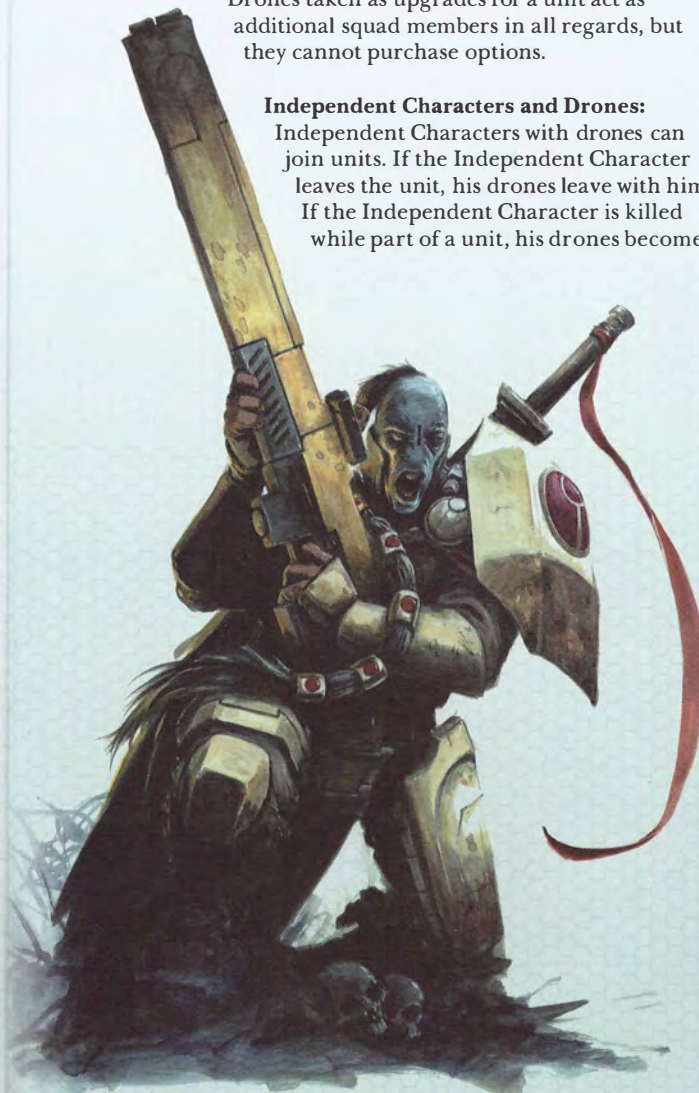
Decoy Launchers: 4+ invulnerable save against glancing and penetrating hits caused by weapons with Interceptor.

Disruption Pod: Stealth.

Flechette Discharger: At Initiative 10 step of the Fight sub-phase, enemy units with any models in base contact with the vehicle suffers a number of Strength 4 AP- hits equal to the number of models it has in base contact with the vehicle.

Point Defence Targeting Relay: Supporting Fire and can fire Overwatch with weapons of Strength 5 or less. Attached drones may also fire Overwatch with weapons of Strength 5 or less.

Sensor Spines: Move Through Cover.



PROFILES

HQ

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv	Unit Type	Pg
Aun'Shi	5	3	3	3	3	5	4	10	-	In(ch)	64
Aun'Va	1	3	2	3	4	1	1	10	5+	In(ch)	61
Cadre Fireblade	4	5	3	3	3	3	3	9	4+	In(ch)	36
Commander	4	5	5	4	4	3	4	10	3+	In, Jp (ch)	34
Commander Farsight	5	5	5	4	4	5	4	10	3+	In, Jp (ch)	57
Commander Shadowsun	4	5	4	3	3	4	4	10	3+	In, Jp (ch)	59
Crisis Bodyguard	2	3	5	4	2	2	3	9	3+	In, Jp	41
Darkstrider	4	5	3	3	3	3	3	9	5+	In(ch)	63
Ethereal	4	3	3	3	2	3	3	10	-	In(ch)	35
Ethereal Guard	4	4	3	3	2	3	3	10	5+	In	61

TROOPS

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv	Unit Type	Pg
Fire Warrior	2	3	3	3	1	2	1	7	4+	In	37
Fire Warrior Shas'ui	2	3	3	3	1	2	2	8	4+	In(ch)	37
Kroot	4	3	3	3	1	3	1	7	6+	In	53
Kroot Hound	4	0	3	3	1	5	2	6	-	Be	53
Krootox Rider	4	3	6	3	2	3	2	7	6+	In	53
Shaper	4	3	3	3	3	3	3	8	6+	In(ch)	53

ELITES

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv	Unit Type	Pg
Crisis Shas'ui	2	3	5	4	2	2	2	8	3+	In, Jp	41
Crisis Shas'vre	2	3	5	4	2	2	3	9	3+	In, Jp(ch)	41
Riptide Shas'vre	2	3	6	6	5	2	3	9	2+	Mc, Jp	45
Stealth Shas'ui	2	3	4	3	1	2	2	8	3+	In, Jp	43
Stealth Shas'vre	2	3	4	3	1	2	3	9	3+	In, Jp(ch)	43

FAST ATTACK

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv	Unit Type	Pg
Pathfinder	2	3	3	3	1	2	1	7	5+	In	38
Pathfinder Shas'ui	2	3	3	3	1	2	2	8	5+	In(ch)	38
Vespid Stingwing	3	3	3	4	1	6	1	6	4+	In, J	54
Vespid Strain Leader	3	3	3	4	1	6	2	9	4+	In, J(ch)	54

HEAVY SUPPORT

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv	Unit Type	Pg
Broadside Shas'ui	2	3	5	4	2	2	2	8	2+	In	42
Broadside Shas'vre	2	3	5	4	2	2	3	9	2+	In(ch)	42
Firesight Marksman	2	5	3	3	1	2	1	7	4+	In	46



VEHICLES

Armour

	WS	BS	S	F	S	R	I	A	HP	Unit Type	Pg
Devilfish	-	3	-	12	11	10	-	-	3	T, Tk, S	39
Hammerhead Gunship	4	-	13	12	10	-	-	3	Tk, S	50	
Piranha	-	3	-	11	10	10	-	-	2	F, O, S	47
Razorshark											
Strike Fighter	-	3	-	11	10	10	-	-	3	Fl	49
Sun Shark Bomber	-	3	-	11	10	10	-	-	3	Fl	48
Sky Ray Gunship	-	4	-	13	12	10	-	-	3	Tk, S	51

DRONES

	WS	BS	S	T	W	I	A	Ld	Sv	Unit Type	Pg
Command-link Drone	2	2	3	4	1	4	1	7	4+	In, Jp(D)	59
Gun Drone	2	2	3	4	1	4	1	7	4+	In, Jp(D)	33
Interceptor Drone	2	2	3	4	1	4	1	7	4+	In, Jp(D)	48
Marker Drone	2	2	3	4	1	4	1	7	4+	In, Jp(D)	33
Missile Drone	2	2	3	4	1	4	1	7	4+	In, Jp(D)	33
MV52 Shield Drone	2	2	3	4	1	4	1	7	4+	In, Jp(D)	59
Recon Drone	2	2	3	4	2	4	1	7	4+	In, Jp(D)	38
Shield Drone	2	2	3	4	1	4	1	7	4+	In, Jp(D)	33
Shielded Missile Drone	2	2	4	6	1	4	1	7	4+	In, Jp(D)	45
Sniper Drone	2	2	3	4	1	4	1	7	4+	In, Jp(D)	46

UNIT TYPES

Beast = Be, Fast = F, Flyer = Fl, Infantry = In, Jet pack unit = Jp, Jump unit = J, Monstrous Creature = (Mc), Open-topped = O, Skimmer = S, Tank = Tk, Transport = T, Character = (ch), Drone = (D)

MELEE WEAPONS

Weapon	Range	S	AP	Type
Equaliser	-	-	4	Melee
Honour blade	-	+2	-	Melee, Two-handed
Kroot rifle	-	User	5	Melee, Two-handed

RANGED WEAPONS

Weapon	Range	S	AP	Type
Airbursting frag projector 18"	18"	4	5	Assault 1, Barrage, Ignores Cover, Large Blast
Burst cannon	18"	5	5	Assault 4
Cyclic ion blaster	-	-	-	-
- Standard	18"	7	4	Assault 3
- Overcharge	18"	8	4	Heavy 1, Blast, Gets Hot
Flamer	Template	4	5	Assault 1
Fusion blaster	18"	8	1	Assault 1, Melta
Heavy burst cannon	-	-	-	-
- Standard	36"	6	4	Heavy 8
- Nova-charge*	36"	6	4	Heavy 12, Gets Hot, Nova-charge, Rending
Ion accelerator	-	-	-	-
- Standard	72"	7	2	Heavy 3
- Overcharge	72"	8	2	Heavy 1, Gets Hot, Large Blast
- Nova-charge*	72"	9	2	Ordnance 1, Gets Hot, Large Blast, Nova-charge
High-yield missile pod	36"	7	4	Heavy 4
Heavy rail rifle	60"	8	1	Heavy 1
Ion cannon	-	-	-	-
- Standard	60"	7	3	Heavy 3
- Overcharge	60"	8	3	Heavy 1, Gets Hot, Large Blast
Ion rifle	-	-	-	-
- Standard	30"	7	4	Rapid Fire
- Overcharge	30"	8	4	Heavy 1, Blast, Gets Hot
Kroot gun	48"	7	4	Rapid Fire
Kroot rifle	-	-	-	-
- Pulse round	24"	4	6	Rapid Fire
- Sniper round*	24"	X	6	Heavy 1, Sniper
Longshot pulse rifle	48"	X	5	Rapid Fire, Sniper
Markerlight	36"	-	-	Heavy 1, Target Acquired
Missile pod	36"	7	4	Assault 2
Neutron blaster	18"	5	3	Assault 1
Plasma rifle	24"	6	2	Rapid Fire
Pulse bomb	-	5	5	Heavy 1, Bomb, Large Blast, One Use Only
Pulse carbine	18"	5	5	Assault 2, Pinning
Pulse rifle	30"	5	5	Rapid Fire
Pulse pistol	12"	5	5	Pistol
Quad ion turret	-	-	-	-
- Standard	30"	7	4	Heavy 4
- Overcharge	30"	8	4	Heavy 1, Gets Hot, Large Blast
Rail rifle	30"	6	1	Rapid Fire
Railgun	-	-	-	-
- Solid shot	72"	10	1	Heavy 1
- Submunition*	72"	6	4	Heavy 1, Large Blast
Seeker missile	72"	8	3	Heavy 1, One Use Only
Smart missile system	30"	5	5	Heavy 4, Homing, Ignores Cover

* Weapons with two profiles have the free choice of which to use, with a few exceptions: the ion accelerator and heavy burst cannon's nova-charge mode, which can only be used with the nova reactor (see XV104 Riptide entry), and the railgun's submunition and Kroot rifle's sniper rounds (which can only be used if purchased).



