

THE TAU v1

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The alien race known as the Tau inhabit an area of space near the eastern fringe of the galaxy and are a young, dynamic race, with highly advanced weaponry and technology. Though less than two thousand years old, their fledgling empire is rapidly expanding into space and encountering all the elder races of the galaxy. In galactic terms their empire is small, based around a densely packed globular cluster of stars, which enables the Tau to travel between them without many of the dangers normally associated with warp travel. The Tau empire also encompasses several alien races who have been subsumed into the empire voluntarily or whose services are bought through trade agreements.

Tau civilisation is based around a rigid system of castes, each relating to the four elements of nature - fire, water, air and earth - which dictate a Tau's particular role within their society, be it warrior, bureaucrat, pilot or worker. Their rulers form a mysterious fifth caste, translated as the Ethereals, who bind the other castes together. The Tau empire is underpinned by the concept that it is only right and noble for the individual to set their own desires aside to work together for the greater good of the empire. Overall, they're very good at it too.

Unlike most alien races which Humanity has encountered, the Tau are not overtly hostile, though they will fight fiercely to protect those territories they have claimed as their own. The sheer dynamism of the Tau is pushing them further into occupied areas of the galaxy and this has inevitably brought them into conflict with both Humans and other alien races. Tau space borders on many Ork-held systems and several Imperial sectors. Craftworlds have passed through their space and the first tendrils of the Tyranid Hive Fleets are approaching. The ongoing expansion of the Tau empire ensures that they are frequently encroaching into other races' territories and border disputes are quick to flare up on the frontiers.

The Tau way of war is efficient and deadly, combining the hitech wargear and weapons of the Tau with the aggression and close combat prowess of their mercenary allies, the Kroot. The Tau dislike close combat, preferring to destroy their enemies at long range with hi-tech weaponry as they are neither particularly strong or tough. When the fighting is likely to get close and bloody, the Tau can call upon allies in the shape of the Kroot. The Kroot are ferocious carnivores employed as mercenaries and are capable of holding their own against most opponents. A Tau commander recognises the skills and abilities of all those under his command and uses them to fearsome effect.

T1.0 TAU SPECIAL RULES

Tau Strategy: 3

Tau Initiative: 2+

T1.1 Support Fire

When a Tau formation that includes a Commander or Pathfinder shoots, it may call on support fire from up to two other Tau formations. The selected formations must either be in Overwatch or not have taken an action so far this turn. The chosen formation(s) must shoot at the same target formation as that being attacked by the formation calling on their support. If any to hit modifiers apply to the primary attacking formation's action, then these do not apply to the other formations taking part (eg, they would not receive a +1 to hit modifier if the primary formation carried out a sustained fire action, or a -1 modifier if it had doubled). Formations that are on overwatch may call on support when they shoot.

Formation's which lend support count as having taken their action for the turn. Note that the target formation only receives one Blast marker for 'coming under fire' no matter how many formations actually shot at it.

T1.2 Discretion Over Valour

The Tau rely on their firepower to deal with enemy forces, and actively avoid hand to hand combat where possible. To reflect this, the Tau may not use a counter-charge to move closer to the enemy. Instead, any Tau not in base contact with the enemy may use a counter-charge to move directly *away* from the closest enemy unit. Should this result in no Tau units remaining within 15cms of the attacking enemy formation, then the assault does not take place. Note that Kroot formations follow the normal rules for counter-charges.

T1.3 Tau Technology

The Tau make use of a number of special pieces of equipment, to which the following special rules apply:

Defensive Fire: Certain Tau weapons are designed to lay down a hail of fire that is particularly effective at breaking up enemy assaults. These weapons will be noted as having the *defensive fire* capability. Units with such weapons are allowed to shoot them when they are charged by an enemy formation. This is a special 'bonus' attack, and takes place after the enemy have made their charge move, and before the Tau counter-charge. If the formation is on Overwatch then it may either shoot using Overwatch, or shoot using Defensive Fire, but may not combine or use both. The effects of suppression and being broken do not apply when making a defensive fire attack, it being assumed that the threat of being charged by the enemy makes the Tau decide to shoot! These things aside, the attack is carried out normally, except that no to hit modifiers apply for the attacking formations action (as it isn't actually taking one!). Blast markers are placed on the target formation normally. Note that a formation that uses defensive fire to shoot at an attacker may *not* call on support, as the formation is not taking a shooting action per se.

Energy Shields: Some Tau vehicles are protected by Energy Shields, each of which provide the vehicle with an Invulnerable Save. If a vehicle has more than one Energy Field, then all of them may be used against each hit suffered by the vehicle. For example, a Manta protected by two energy fields would be allowed to make two invulnerable saves against each hit that got past its armour save.

Markerlights: Tau Markerlights are a sophisticated piece of technology that allow Tau infantry to 'mark' enemy units and make them easier to hit. Each Markerlight that is within range and line of fire of the enemy allows another weapon from the same formation (or that is lending support fire as described above) to re-roll a failed to hit roll. Suppression and being broken has no effect on the use of Markerlights, though they may stop units being able to shoot, rendering the Markerlight redundant.

Seeker Missiles: A Seeker Missile can automatically seek out and attack a target that has been illuminated by a Markerlight, even if the vehicle firing the missile does not have a line of sight to the target. This is represented in the game by allowing vehicles armed with Seeker Missiles to attack any enemy units that are in range and line of fire of at least one Tau unit fitted with a Markerlight. Remember that suppression or being broken has no effect on the use of Markerlights. Each Markerlight can be used to illuminate one Seeker Missile attack when a formation shoots, but the Markerlight can be used again when another formation shoots. Seeker missiles may not use a Markerlight to re-roll a failed to hit roll.

For example, an enemy formation is within range and line of fire of two Markerlight equipped units. A Tau vehicle formation shoots, and is allowed to shoot two Seeker Missiles at the formation. Later in the action phase another Tau vehicle formation shoots. It is allowed to shoot two Seeker Missiles at the enemy formation.

In addition to this, a Tau formation can split its fire when shooting Seeker Missiles. This allows the formation to attack two different target formations, but only if one of the target formations is *only* attacked by seeker missiles.

DESIGN CONCEPTS

Tau Drones: The effect of Tau drones is included in the characteristics for other Tau units, rather than being represent separately. Because of this any Tau infantry base may include one or two drones if desired. The exception to this are independent Gun Drones, which are fielded as units in their own right.

Tau Firepower: In order to underline the Tau's disdain for close quarter fighting I have given them very low close combat and firefight values. On the other hand they have some of the best weapons in the game for making shooting attacks. The effect of this is plain – stand off and shoot with your Tau army!

Tau Miniatures: The Epic Tau miniature range will not be available until the Tau rules are published. Until then playtesters will need to either use stand-in or scratch-built models, or use the excellent Epic scale Tau models produced by Forge World. You can find out more about the Forge World range at their website at www.forgeworld.com.

Basing Tau Units: Battlesuits should be mounted 2-4 to a base (in terms of unit characteristics I've assumed that Crisis and Broadsides are mounted two to a base, while Stealth have four to a base). Heavy gun drones are also mounted 2-4 to a base.

TAU ARMY LIST

Tau Hunter Cadres			
Cadre Type	Units	Upgrades	Points Costs
Hunter Cadre	1 Commander unit, 2 Crisis Battlesuit units, 8 Fire Warrior units	Ethereal, Team Leader, Transport, Broadside Battlesuit	500 points

Tau Support Cadres (take up to three for each Hunter Cadre in the army)			
Cadre Type	Units	Upgrades	Points Costs
Pathfinders	4 Pathfinders and 2 Devilfish	Stealth Battlesuit	150 points
Gun Drones	4 Gun Drone Stands	Heavy Gun Drones	75 points
Hammerheads	4 Hammerheads	Skyray	250 points
Kroot Kindred	8 Kroot units and 2 Kroot Hounds	Krootox, Knarloc	200 points
Manta	1 Manta	None	750 points

Tau Upgrades (Cadres may take one of each allowed upgrade)		
Upgrade	Units/Upgrade	Cost
0-1 Ethereal	Add 1 Ethereal character to the formation.	50 points
Team Leader	Up to 4 Team Leader characters may be added to Fire Warrior units	10 points each
Transport	4 Devilfish or 2 Orca	100 points
Stealth Battlesuit	Up to 2 Stealth Battlesuit units	50 points each
Skyray	Replace one Hammerhead with 1 Skyray	50 points
Heavy Gun Drones	Replace 1 Gun Drone with 1 Heavy Gun Drone	10 points each
Krootox	Up to 2 Krootox	25 points each
Knarloc	1 Knarloc	25 points

Tau Air Caste Formations (up to 1/3 or armies points may be spent on Air Caste formations)		
Upgrade	Units/Upgrade	Cost
Barracuda Superiority Fighters	2 Barracuda	175 points
Tigershark	1 Tigershark	150 points
Orbital Support	1 Hero Class Cruiser	150 points

TAU UNIT DATASHEETS

Tau Ethereal				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Character	na	na	na	na
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Honour Blade	(base contact)	assault weapon	Extra Attack (+1)	

Notes: Inspiring, Invulnerable Save, Leader, Supreme Commander.

Tau Commander				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Infantry	30cm	4+	4+	5+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Burst Cannon	15cm	AP5+	Defensive Fire	
Fusion Blaster	15cm	AT5+	Defensive Fire	
Missile Pod	45cm	AP5+/AT6+		
Plasma Rifles	30cm	AP4+/AT6+		

Notes: Jump Pack, Leader, Reinforced Armour, Support Fire.

Crisis Battlesuit				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Infantry	30cm	4+	5+	5+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Burst Cannon	15cm	AP5+	Defensive Fire	
Fusion Blaster	15cm	AT5+	Defensive Fire	
Missile Pods	45cm	AP5+/AT6+		
Plasma Rifles	30cm	AP4+/AT6+		

Notes: Jump Pack, Reinforced Armour.

Broadside Battlesuit				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Infantry	15cm	4+	5+	5+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
2 x Railgun	75cm	MW5+		
Plasma Rifles	30cm	AP4+/AT6+		

Notes: Reinforced Armour.

Tau Team Leader				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Character	na	na	na	na
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Markerlight	30cm	na	Markerlight	

Notes: none.

Fire Warrior Team				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Infantry	15cm	5+	6+	6+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Pulse Rifle	30cm	AP5+	Defensive Fire	
Notes: none.				

Pathfinders				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Infantry	15cm	5+	6+	6+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Pulse Carbines	15cm	AP5+	Defensive Fire	
Markerlight	30cm	na	Markerlight	
Notes: Scouts, Support Fire.				

Stealth Battlesuit				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Infantry	30cm	4+	5+	5+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
4 x Burst Cannon	15cm	AP5+	Defensive Fire	
Notes: Jump Pack, Reinforced Armour, Scouts.				

Devilfish				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Armoured Vehicle	30cm	5+	6+	6+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Burst Cannon	15cm	AP5+	Defensive Fire	
Seeker Missile	Unlimited	AP5+/AT5+	Seeker Missile	
Notes: Skimmer, Transport (may carry two of the following units: Fire Warriors, Pathfinders).				

Orca Transport				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
War Engine	30cm	4+	6+	6+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
4 x Burst Cannon	15cm	AP5+	Defensive Fire	
Damage Capacity: 2. Critical Damage: The Orca's fuel explodes, destroying it and killing everyone on board.				
Notes: Planetfall, Skimmer, Transport (may carry six of the following units: Fire Warriors, Battlesuits).				

Gun Drones				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Infantry	15cm	5+	6+	6+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Pulse Carbines	15cm	AP5+	Defensive Fire	
Notes: Jump Pack, Fearless.				

Heavy Gun Drones				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Infantry	15cm	5+	6+	6+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
3 x Burst Cannon	15cm	AP5+	Defensive Fire	
Notes: Jump Pack, Fearless.				

Hammerhead				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Armoured Vehicle	30cm	4+	6+	6+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Ion Cannon	60cm	AP4+/AT4+		
2 x Burst Cannon	15cm	AP5+	Defensive Fire	
Seeker Missile	Unlimited	AP5+/AT5+	Seeker Missile	
Notes: Skimmer				

Skyray				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Armoured Vehicle	30cm	4+	6+	6+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Skyray Missile Array	60cm	AA4+		
Seeker Missile	Unlimited	AP5+/AT5+	Seeker Missile	
Smart Missile	30cm	AP4+	Ignore Cover	
Notes: Skimmer.				

Manta Heavy Transport				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
War Engine	25cm	4+	6+	6+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
2 x Railcannon	90cm	MW4+	Fixed Forward Arc	
3 x Ion Cannon	60cm	AP4+/AT4+	Right Side	
3 x Ion Cannon	60cm	AP4+/AT4+	Left Side	
6 x Burst Cannon	15cm	AP5+	Defensive Fire	
Damage Capacity: 6. 2 Energy Shields . Critical Damage: The Manta's controls are damaged, and the pilot must make a forced landing. The Manta is treated as immobile for the rest of the game. Any further critical hits cause an extra point of damage instead.				
Notes: Planetfall, Reinforced Armour, Skimmer, Transport (may carry twelve of the following units: Fire Warriors, Battlesuits PLUS up to 4 of the following units: Devilfish, Hammerhead, Skyray).				

Kroot				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Infantry	15cm	none	4+	6+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Kroot Rifle	(15cm)	Small Arms		
Notes: Infiltrate.				

Kroot Hounds				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Infantry	15cm	none	3+	-
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Teeth	(contact)	Assault Weapon		
Notes: Infiltrate.				

Krootox				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Light Vehicle	15cm	5+	4+	6+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Kroot Gun	45cm	AP5+/AT6+		
Notes: None.				

Knarloc				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Light Vehicle	15cm	4+	3+	-
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Huge Beak	(base contact)	Assault Weapon	Extra Attack (+1)	
Notes: None.				

Barracuda				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Aircraft	Fighter-Bomber	5+	-	-
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Ion Cannon	30cm	AP4+/AT4+/AA5+	Fixed Forward Arc	
Burst Cannon	15cm	AP5+/AA6+	Left Side	
Burst Cannon	15cm	AP5+/AA6+	Right Side	
Twin Missile Pod	30cm	AP3+/AT5+	Fixed Forward	
Notes: None.				

Tigershark				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
War Engine Aircraft	Bomber	5+	-	-
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Twin Ion Cannon	30cm	AP3+/AT3+/AA4+	Fixed Forward Arc	
Burst Cannon	15cm	AP5+/AA6+	Left Side	
Burst Cannon	15cm	AP5+/AA6+	Right Side	
Twin Missile Pod	30cm	AP3+/AT5+	Fixed Forward	
Tracer Missile	Unlimited	AP4+/AT4+	Seeker Missile	
Damage Capacity 2. Critical Damage: The Tigershark's fuel explodes and it is destroyed.				
Notes: Transport (four of the following units: Gun Drones, Heavy Gun Drones).				

Hero Class Cruiser				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Spacecraft	na	na	na	na
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Orbital Bombardment	na	3BP	Macro-weapon	
Pin-point attack	na	MW2+	Titan Killer (D3)	
Notes: Transport (may carry 3 Mantas. Any Manta may be replaced by 2 Orcas if desired).				