

THE TAU v3

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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 Coordinated Fire

When a Tau formation that includes a Commander or Pathfinder shoots, it may call on the help of up to two other Tau formations. The selected formations must 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. The other formations taking part count as taking a Sustained Fire action for the purpose of to hit modifiers, while the primary mformation uses the modifier that applies to the action it is taking. Formations that are on overwatch *may* call on support when they shoot. Note that the target formation only receives one Blast marker for 'coming under fire' no matter how many formations actually shot at it.

Formation's which lend support count as having taken their action for the turn. Aside from the changes noted above, all of the restrictions that apply to normal shooting also apply to formations that shoot as part of a coordinated fire attack.

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, Tau formations (but not Kroot) gain a +1 initiative bonus when taking Overwatch or Sustained Fire actions, but suffer a -2 initiative penalty when attempting to take an Engage action.

In Addition, the Tau may not use a counter-charge to move closer to the enemy. Instead, the Tau are allowed to *fall back* immediately before the enemy make their charge move (note that falling back happens before the charge is made, while a counter-charge is made after the charge move). Any Tau unit may move the distance that they could normally counter-charge, but must move directly away from the closest enemy unit from the assaulting formation. Kroot formations follow the normal rules for counter-charges.

T1.3 Tau Technology

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.

Guide Munitions: Some Tau weapons are noted as being 'guided munitions'. Hit from these weapons may only be allocated to units that are within 30cms and in the line of fire of a Tau unit that has Markerlights. As long as this requirement is met then the firing unit does not require a line of fire to the target unit itself, as the munitions are guided to the target by the Markerlight. The Tau unit 'illuminating' the target does not need to belong to the same unit as the firing formation, but may not be broken or suppressed. These changes aside, all of the normal shooting rules apply.

Targeting Systems: Tau Battlesuits and vehicles are equipped with sophisticated targeting systems that allow them to shoot accurately on the move. Because of this, Tau infantry wearing XV Battlesuits (Commanders, Crisis, Broadside and Stealth), and all Tau vehicles and war engines, may ignore the -1 to hit penalty for shooting when taking a Double action.

DESIGN NOTES

Tau Drones: The effect of Drones is built into the shooting values and armour values of Tau units, rather than being listed separately. For example, the effect of Gun Drones is built into the firepower for the plasma rifles and plasma carbines used by Tau infantry, and the presence of Shield Drones accounts for the higher than average armour values of Tau infantry and the reinforced armour found on Tau battlesuits.

Markerlights & Seeker Missiles: The 'firepower' associated with Markerlights represents their ability to guide seeker missiles towards a target. The seeker missiles used in this case are assumed to come from a variety of off-table resources, such as aircraft, weapon batteries and orbital missile platforms. In addition some vehicles are fitted with seeker missile batteries that can be used to make attacks against enemy units that are within 30cms of a Markerlight equipped unit (see guided munitions above).

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 Broadside are mounted two to a base, while Stealth have four to a base). Heavy gun drones are also mounted 2-4 to a base. Feel free to add a Drone to infantry and Battlesuit stands if you wish (and even to vehicle 'stands' if you mount your vehicles on a base), as I have incorporated the defensive benefits of drones into Tau unit's saving throws.

TAU ARMY LIST

Tau Hunter Cadres – 600 points		
(Each cadre consists of the following three formations. Each formation can move separately and can be given their own upgrades.)		
Formation	Units	Upgrades
Crisis Battlesuits	1 Commander unit and 3 Crisis Battlesuit units	Ethereal, Orca, Stealth Battlesuit
Pathfinders	4 Pathfinders & 2 Devilfish	Stealth Battlesuit
Firewarriors	8 Firewarriors	Devilfish, Orca

Tau Support Cadres			
(up to three for each per Hunter Cadre in the army)			
Cadre Type	Units	Upgrades	Points Costs
Broadside Battlesuits	4 Broadside units	Orca	250points
Gun Drones	4 Gun Drone Stands	Heavy Gun Drones	75 points
Hammerheads	4 Hammerheads	Skyray	250 points
Kroot Kindred	10 Kroot units	Kroot Hounds, Krootox, Knarloc	200 points
Manta	1 Manta	None	650 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
Devilfish	4 Devilfish	100 points
Orca	1 Orca	50 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 any number of Gun Drones with an equal number of Heavy Gun Drone	15 points each
Krootox	Up to 3 Krootox	15 points each
Knarloc	1 Knarloc	25 points
Kroothounds	Up to 3 Kroot Hounds	10 points each

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	3 Barracuda	250 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+	3+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Twin Burst Cannon	15cm	AP4+	Disrupt	
Twin Fusion Blaster	15cm	AT4+		
Twin Missile Pods	45cm	AP4+/AT4+		
Plasma Rifles	30cm	AP4+		

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

Crisis Battlesuit				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Infantry	30cm	4+	5+	3+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Twin Burst Cannon	15cm	AP4+	Disrupt	
Twin Fusion Blaster	15cm	AT4+		
Twin Missile Pods	45cm	AP4+/AT4+		
Plasma Rifles	30cm	AP4+		

Notes: Jump Pack, Reinforced Armour.

Broadside Battlesuit				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Infantry	15cm	4+	6+	5+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
2 x Twin Railgun	75cm	AT2+		
Plasma Rifles	30cm	AP4+		

Notes: Reinforced Armour.

Stealth Battlesuit				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Infantry	30cm	4+	6+	3+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Multiple Burst Cannon	15cm	AP2+	Disrupt	

Notes: Jump Pack, Reinforced Armour, Scouts.

Fire Warrior Team				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Infantry	15cm	5+	6+	4+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Pulse Rifles	30cm	AP4+		
Markerlight	30cm	AT5+		

Notes: None.

Pathfinders				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Infantry	15cm	5+	6+	4+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Pulse Carbines	15cm	AP4+	Disrupt	
Markerlights	30cm	AT4+		

Notes: Scouts, Coordinated Fire.

Devilfish				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Armoured Vehicle	30cm	5+	6+	5+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Burst Cannon	15cm	AP4+	Disrupt	

Notes: Skimmer, Transport (may carry two of the following units: Fire Warriors, Pathfinders). Burst Cannon firepower includes effect of Gun Drones.

Orca Transport				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
War Engine	30cm	4+	6+	4+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
2 x Twin Burst Cannon	15cm	AP4+	Disrupt	

Damage Capacity: 2. Critical Damage: The Orca's fuel explodes, destroying it and killing everyone on board.

Notes: Planetfall, Skimmer, Transport (may carry eight of the following units: Commander, Fire Warriors, Pathfinders, Battlesuits. Commanders and Battlesuits take up two spaces each)

Gun Drones				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Infantry	15cm	5+	6+	4+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Pulse Carbines	15cm	AP4+	Disrupt	

Notes: Jump Pack.

Heavy Gun Drones				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Infantry	15cm	5+	6+	4+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Multiple Burst Cannon	15cm	AP2+	Disrupt	
Notes: Jump Pack.				

Hammerhead				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Armoured Vehicle	30cm	4+	6+	4+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Ion Cannon	60cm	AP4+/AT4+/AA6+		
OR				
Hammerhead Railgun	75cm	AT3+/AP4+		
PLUS				
Smart Missiles	30cm	AP4+	Ignore Cover	
Seeker Missiles	Unlimited	AT4+	Guided Munitions	
Gun Drones	15cm	AP5+	Disrupt	
Notes: Skimmer. May have Ion Cannon or Railgun, but not both.				

Skyray				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Armoured Vehicle	30cm	4+	6+	6+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Skyray Missile Array	Unlimited	AT4+/AA5+	Guided Munitions	
Smart Missile	30cm	AP4+	Ignore Cover	
Markerlight	30cm	na		
Notes: Skimmer.				

Manta Heavy Transport (further Manta variants will be added to the list over time)				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
War Engine	25cm	4+	6+	4+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
2 x Railcannon	90cm	MW3+	Fixed Forward Arc	
3 x Ion Cannon	60cm	AP4+/AT4+/AA6+	Right Side	
3 x Ion Cannon	60cm	AP4+/AT4+/AA6+	Left Side	
2 x Multiple Burst Cannon	15cm	AP2+	Disrupt	
Damage Capacity: 6. Two 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: Commanders, Fire Warriors, Pathfinders, Battlesuits PLUS up to 4 of the following units: Devilfish, Hammerhead, Skyray).				

Kroot				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Infantry	15cm	none	4+	5+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Kroot Rifle	(15cm)	Small Arms		
Notes: Infiltrate.				

Kroot Hounds				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Character	na	na	na	na
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Teeth	(contact)	Assault Weapon	Extra Attack (+1)	
Notes: None				

Krootox				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Character	na	na	na	na
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), Macro-weapon	
Notes: None.				

Barracuda				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Aircraft	Fighter	6+	-	-
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Ion Cannon	30cm	AP4+/AT4+/AA5+	Fixed Forward Arc	
Twin Burst Cannon	15cm	AP4+/AA5+		
Twin Missile Pod	30cm	AP4+/AT4+	Fixed Forward Arc	
Notes: None.				

Tigershark				
Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
War Engine Aircraft	Bomber	5+	-	4+ (Tracer Missiles)
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Twin Ion Cannon	30cm	AP3+/AT3+/AA4+	Fixed Forward Arc	
Twin Burst Cannon	15cm	AP4+/AA5+		
Twin Missile Pod	30cm	AP4+/AT4+	Fixed Forward Arc	
Tracer Missile	Unlimited	AT2+	Guided Munitions	
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). The Tigersharks Tracer Missiles may be used to allow it to lend supporting fire.				

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).				