

# TAU EMPIRE EPIC ARMY LIST

Tau Third Phase Expansion Force

Version 6.4

## CONTENTS

Page 1 .....	Title Page
Page 2 .....	Tau Background
Page 4 .....	Tau Special Rules
Page 5 .....	Tau Army List
Page 6 .....	Tau Units
Page 15 .....	Design Notes

Army list originally created by:

Jervis Johnson

ERC-appointed army list Champion:

Joe Jephson

With assistance from:

Ben Skinner  
Gary Carney  
'Steele'  
'Jaldon'  
Trent Bartlem  
Zac Berlado  
'Schmitty'  
'Niyaz'  
'KivArn'  
'Woke\_up\_dead'  
'Lion in the Stars'  
'The Philosopher'  
Matt 'Dobbsy' Dobbs  
Steve 'Onyx' Marr  
Matt 'Rug' Arnold

As well as many members of the 'Tactical Command'  
and 'Specialist Games' web forums.

And notable Development by:

Jim 'Honda' Kontilis, Chris Reiter and Iain Werry

List developed for the NetEA Project.

# TAU EMPIRE: Tau Third Phase Expansion Force

## TAU BACKGROUND

### THE TAU

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 hi-tech 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 nor 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.

**"We are not here to bring death and destruction to you, Gue'la. Even though your armed forces have laid waste to our systems, bombarded our cities and slaughtered my fellow Tau, we are not here for revenge. We are here to offer you to share our culture and profit from our technology and protection.**

**We are not here to take your homes, your families and your beliefs away from you. You can even continue to worship your Emperor-god if you want, you must only swear fealty to the advancement of the Greater Good, which will benefit all members of the empire alike.**

**We are not here to turn you all into soldiers and demand of you to fight against your former kin. Some of you will be asked to join our armed forces, in return for the protection that we grant to your planet. But if you are unwilling to fight against Humans from the Imperium, you will not be deployed against them. We are not here to enslave you, but to welcome you into our empire, the empire of the Tau"**

**Por'vre Dal'yth Jishu'iro,  
Addressing the human population of Goron Minor**

### THE TAU EMPIRE

The Tau are a relatively young, aspiring race, whose homeworld is situated deep in the galactic eastern rim of Ultima Segmentum. The ancestors of the Tau had been discovered by an Imperial exploratory mission several thousand years ago. At that time, they had been a primitive society which was confined to its homeworld of T'au and had achieved a developmental level similar to the Stone Age on Terra. They were earmarked for routine extermination by the Imperial Navy, but before this could happen, the entire region became isolated by unusually strong warp storms - thus the Tau could escape their premature doom.

It was only thousands of years later that the situation began to calm down and soon after, another 'first contact' with the Tau was made but now they had progressed to a technological level that was comparable, in some instances even superior, to Imperial standards. There are currently many different theories about how the Tau could develop and expand in so little time, but ultimately this question remains a mystery.

The Tau had already established a considerable empire in their sphere of influence as well as diplomatic and economic relations with various alien races, including human dissidents who had separated themselves from the Imperium. All things considered, they are a peaceful and altruistic race and try to avoid bloodshed if at all possible. However, they do have powerful armed forces and are willing to employ them if it will further their goals. They are a rapidly expanding and colonising race and often wage wars to further this expansion. Of the dominant races of the galaxy they are the most open to new concepts, technology and alien cultures. They also have a very optimistic outlook on the future and the universe at large. Still, the universe is a big and violent place and there are many factions far more powerful than the Tau, so not even their survival as a race is certain, even if their immediate future looks promising.

It is not the Tau's way to follow a xenophobic policy of conquest and genocide of aliens as the Human Imperium does, instead they are willing to integrate alien races into their empire. This was the case with the warrior race of the Kroot who also hail from this region of space. Following a common battle against Orks, the two races forged an alliance which has seen both parties benefiting until today. The Kroot are fierce and relatively primitive but provide excellent close assault troops for the armies of the Tau, who are themselves not really suited for this kind of warfare. In return, the Tau supply the Kroot with weapons and technology which they are unable to produce themselves. Despite the good relations between both races, their differences are a point that has repeatedly caused friction.

As the Tau influence and encroachment in the Imperial sectors surrounding their empire grew too strong, the Imperium assembled an enormous warhost, which became known as the Damocles crusade. Initially, the Imperial Navy was able to remain victorious against several minor Tau colonies, but as the crusade hit the major sept world of Dal'yth, they ran into fierce resistance. After horrendous losses for both sides and reports coming in about the assault from Tyranid Hive Fleet Behemoth, the Imperials were forced to withdraw.

**"It rues me that we have to withdraw here and leave this xenos filth victorious, trampling on the Emperor's will in their foul and ignorant ways. However, the orders from Inquisitor Kryptman and Lord Calgar are clear: a new threat has surfaced from the void and is seemingly rampaging its way towards our very homeworld, so this must be countered first. I took a long last look upon Dal'yth from the command bridge and swore under the Emperor's eyes that one day we shall return and cleanse these abominations with fire and bolter, as it is His demand and our sacred duty."**

**Personal Log of Captain Lucius Idaeus,  
4<sup>th</sup> Company Ultramarines Chapter**

## THE TAU MILITARY

Tau society is separated into five castes: fire, earth, air, water and the mysterious ethereal caste. The fire caste (Shas) are the fighting arm of the empire, providing soldiers and vehicle crews for the military. The earth caste (Fio) are workers and engineers, the air caste (Kor) are responsible for crewing and operating all aircraft and flyers and the water caste (Por) is the caste of the diplomats, judges and politicians. The Ethereal caste or Aun hold the position of ruling caste in Tau society, though what causes the other castes' unquestioning loyalty to them remains unknown.

All Tau are closely linked to each other and have a strong racial conscience. Everyone has his place in society and all work to achieve the same goal, the Tau'va, the Greater Good, which avails all members of the Tau Empire. This is also noticeable in their battle tactics, where mutual support and combined arms are prominent issues. The Tau have a more flexible and mobile approach to battle than the Imperium, as they lack the almost limitless personnel and resources of the human race. Thus they use mobility to get into position and then employ hi-tech weaponry to eliminate the enemy from afar or in deadly short-range shooting. While Tau do fight close up (a necessity often dictated by terrain, visibility and weapon ranges), they still employ the same doctrine of cautiously moving forward and obliterating the enemy with sustained bursts of suppressive fire instead of storming forwards guns blazing like other, more aggressive races such as Humans or Orks. Close combat is generally scorned and left for those with a natural inclination for it, like their Kroot auxiliaries. They also don't employ attrition as the Tau do not recognise the concept of expendable troops. The Tau way of war revolves around relatively small, dedicated specialist teams to hit the enemy with disastrously effective firepower.

To accomplish this, the basis for all Tau strategies and tactics are the two concepts of Kauyon (silent hunter) and Mont'ka (killing blow). Kauyon means getting the enemy to move into a compromising position where he can be picked on and eliminated by the Tau. This is almost invariably achieved by a lure, this might be a Tau formation feigning weakness and retreating to draw the attackers into a well-prepared ambush, an important objective like a city or bridge, or even the demonstrative absence of troops. Mont'ka on the other hand means relocating and deploying the Tau firepower in such a way that the enemy can be destroyed quickly and decisively.

## THE THIRD PHASE COLONISATIONS

**"Expansion is not a linear process; once started, it advances itself by its own needs. Expansion leads to ever more planets and regions being colonised which raises the demand for ever more resources which in turn makes ever further colonisation necessary once the pendulum is set in motion, it will not stop out of its own accord.**

**This is the equilibrium we ought to strive for, continuous, instantaneous change of the stationary state, yet the entirety remains true to how it has always been. Right now, our Empire is ascendant, expansion is the only way forward, expansion is inevitable."**

**Aun'o Tau'n Min'daka, argument in council**

Over recent centuries, the Tau Empire has been continually forcing its expansion, colonising and annexing neighbouring systems. The Imperial response in the form of the Damocles crusade has been the only major throwback, and even this failure was quickly amended as the Tau forces re-conquered lost systems practically in the wake of the retiring Imperials. Ever since this clash with the Human Imperium, the Tau have been preparing another phase of concentrated expansion.

Then the Despoiler struck at the Cadian Gate, and the ripples of this conflict could even be felt on the eastern fringe. This campaign, the 13<sup>th</sup> Black Crusade, has seen an unprecedented relocation of troops in the entire Imperium, and the Tau saw their opportunity. The Imperium was weakened and wavering as the Tau Third Phase Expansion hit it full force. The first and strongest attack saw the Tau fleets striking systems in the Damocles Gulf and the Perdur Rift and it was there that the greatest number of planets was conquered. Many human populations chose to pledge allegiance to the Tau'va rather than the distant and abstract Imperium. All in all, the Tau have managed to established five Third Phase (also referred to as Third Sphere) colonies clustered around their existing sept worlds during this period. After this surge of conquest, the Tau Empire is currently consolidating its hold on the newly won sectors, preparing for any counter-strikes the Imperium might muster.

# TAU SPECIAL RULES

## COORDINATED FIRE

The Tau are masters of ranged warfare and have several very experienced fighters and specially equipped troops that are able to lead other Tau on an attack, expertly directing their fire against the foe; thus Tau are especially adept at outflanking enemy formations and attacking them from several sides with their deadly coordinated fire.

Some units are noted as being able to call in coordinated fire. These units can order up to two other formations within 15cm that have not taken an action this turn, and which are not broken, to follow their own formation when they take an advance, double or sustained fire action.

Make a single initiative roll for all formations, counting a single -1 modifier if any have blast markers. If the test is failed then the original formation (containing the unit calling for coordinated fire) receives a Blast marker and must take a hold action, but the other formations are unaffected (and may take an action later in the turn). If the test is passed then all formations concerned are allowed to take either an advance, double or sustained fire action.

There is no obligation for all formations to take the same action, and these actions may be resolved in any order, but they must all fire at the same target formation. The formations don't have to stay within a given distance of each other and will complete their actions one after the other. Each formations action is declared and resolved (including testing to see if the target formation is broken) before moving on to the next Tau formation.

Note that units with this ability confer the Coordinated Fire ability to any formation that they join. For example, a Pathfinder upgrade purchased to be added to a Fire Warrior Cadre, adds the Coordinated Fire ability to all units in the Cadre.

## MARKERLIGHTS

Markerlights are devices carried by many types of Tau infantry and vehicles. They allow their user to mark out enemy targets electronically, so that they can easily be targeted and engaged by other friendly units. Some Tau weapons, such as Seeker missiles are self-guided projectiles that can only be fired on targets marked by a markerlight. Their robotic brains allow them to independently find their way to their designated target, avoiding any obstacles in the way.

All enemy formations with at least one unit within 30cm range and Line of Fire (LOF) of at least one Tau unit with the markerlights ability is considered to be marked. When shooting at a marked formation, all ranged firepower attacks add +1 to their to-hit roll.

Guided Missiles may only be fired at a target formation that is marked, but Guided Missiles may be fired without LOF if the target is marked. A Tau formation may not mark an enemy formation if it has used the March order during the turn, or if it is broken. This bonus for shooting at a marked enemy may not be used when making Anti-Aircraft attacks.

## TAU JET PACKS

Tau Battlesuits and Drones make use of powerful and sophisticated jump packs. These allow them to pounce on the enemy and strafe them before retreating again out of range of the survivors' retribution.

Tau Jet Packs follow all the rules for Jump Packs. Additionally, units with Tau Jet Packs are allowed to make an additional move of 10cm at the end of an advance, double or march order. The extra move is allowed whether or not the unit fires and takes place after any firing. This extra move may be in any direction and follows all the normal movement rules, so unit coherency and zones of control must be adhered to as usual. No extra movement is allowed on any orders other than advance, double or march.

In formations where only some of the units have Tau Jet Packs, the units without Tau Jet Packs are not allowed the extra move.

## TAU DEFLECTOR SHIELDS

Tau deflector shields work in a different way to Imperial or Ork shields in that they do not absorb the incoming energy, but are shaped and positioned in such a way as to deflect the incoming fire (hence the designation). A further noteworthy trait is that the shield's response will be proportionally more powerful with the energy of the attack.

Tau deflector shields work like an invulnerable save in all respects, except that this invulnerable save is always at 5+.

## SUPPORT CRAFT

Some units operate above the battlefield, below the airspace used by aircraft, but higher than standard skimmer levels and terrain features.

Support craft are skimmers, which for all line of sight and terrain purposes count as 'popped up' at all times. If the Support Craft has a transport option, it may embark and disembark units as normal, embarked units are allowed a save (see 1.7.5) if the Support Craft is destroyed.

Support Craft do not block line of sight, must always use their Skimmer ability to force a firefight in engagements and Infantry in base contact with a Support Craft may not use it to count as being in cover.

## TAU THIRD PHASE EXPANSION ARMY LIST

Tau Third Phase Expansion Armies have a Strategy Rating of 3. Crisis Battlesuit Cadres and the Manta Dropship are Initiative 1+, all other formations are Initiative 2+.

### Tau Core Formations—Any amount of core formations may be selected.

FORMATION	UNITS	UPGRADES ALLOWED	COST
<b>Crisis Battlesuit Cadre</b>	4 XV8 Crisis Battlesuit units	Commander, Crisis Suits, Gun Drones	250pts
<b>Fire Warrior Cadre</b>	8 Tau Fire Warrior units <b>or</b> 6 Tau Fire Warrior units and 3 Devilfish	Bonded Team, Broadsides, Ethereal, Fire Warriors, Gun Drones, Hammerheads, Pathfinders, Piranhas, Skyray	225pts

### Tau Support Formations—Up to three may be selected per core formation.

FORMATION	UNITS	UPGRADES ALLOWED	COST
<b>Armour Support Group</b>	4 Hammerhead Gunships	Hammerheads, Skyray	200pts
<b>Broadside Group</b>	6 XV88 Broadside Battlesuits	None	300pts
<b>Kroot Kindred</b>	1 Kroot Master Shaper unit and 9 Kroot Warrior units	Kroot, Kroot Hounds, Krootox	175pts
<b>Pathfinder Group</b>	4 Pathfinder units and 2 Devilfish	Gun Drones, Piranhas	200pts
<b>Recon Skimmer Group</b>	6 Tetra or Piranha, in any combination	Gun Drones, Piranhas	175pts
<b>Skysweep Support Group</b>	3 Skyray Air Defence Gunships	None	275pts
<b>Stealth Group</b>	6 XV15 Stealth Battlesuit units	Gun Drones	250pts

### Tau Upgrades—Up to three upgrades may be selected to be added to each formation.

No upgrade may be taken by a formation more than once.

FORMATION	UNITS / EFFECT	COST
<b>Bonded Team</b>	Add the <i>Leader</i> ability to One Fire Warrior unit	25pts
<b>Broadsides</b>	Add Three XV88 Broadside Battlesuits	150pts
<b>Commander</b>	Add One Shas'el Commander to a Crisis Battlesuit unit <b>or</b> Add One Shas'o Commander to a Crisis Battlesuit unit (Max One Per Army)	50pts 100pts
<b>Crisis Suits</b>	Add One to Four Crisis Battlesuit units	50pts each
<b>Ethereal</b>	Add One Ethereal to a Fire Warrior unit (Max One Per Army)	75pts
<b>Fire Warriors</b>	Add Four Fire Warrior units <b>or</b> Add Four Fire Warrior units and Two Devilfish	100pts 150pts
<b>Gun Drones</b>	Add One or Two Gun Drone units <b>or</b> Add Four Gun Drone units	25pts each 75pts
<b>Hammerheads</b>	Add Two Hammerhead Gunships	100pts
<b>Kroot</b>	Add Five Kroot Warrior units	75pts
<b>Kroot Hounds</b>	Add Three Kroot Hound packs	50pts
<b>Krootox</b>	Add Three Krootox Herds	75pts
<b>Pathfinders</b>	Add Two Pathfinder units and One Devilfish	125pts
<b>Piranhas</b>	Add Three Piranhas	75pts
<b>Skyray</b>	Add One Skyray Air Defence Gunship	100pts

### Air Caste Formations—1/3<sup>rd</sup> of your army list may be Air Caste formations.

FORMATION	UNITS	COST
<b>Barracuda Squadron</b>	2 Barracuda Fighters	150pts
<b>Manta Dropship</b>	1 Manta	675pts
<b>Orca Dropship</b>	1 Orca	150pts
<b>0-1 Spacecraft</b>	1 Hero Class Cruiser <b>or</b> 1 Custodian Class Battleship	200pts 250pts
<b>Tiger Shark Squadron</b>	2 Tiger Sharks May begin the game transporting a formation of 6 Gun Drone units	175pts +100pts
<b>Tiger Shark AX-1-0 Squadron</b>	2 Tiger Shark AX-1-0	375pts

# TAU UNITS

## ETHEREAL CASTE MEMBER

Ethereals (Aun) are not members of the Fire Caste, but form a separate caste ruling all others. The loyalty all other Tau display towards them is total, their views and commandments are never questioned, save in council by a fellow Aun. Unsurprisingly, they have a profound psychological influence on the troops fighting around them, motivating them to acts of bravery or unflinching defence. However, this does not happen out of fear but out of deep respect. Ethereals sometimes accompany a Fire Warrior Cadre into battle, though whether their presence on the field is to command or to observe their troops is difficult to say. In battle, they are accompanied by shield drones programmed to protect them by physically getting in the way of incoming shots or blows if necessary, and they carry the ceremonial weapons of the Ethereal caste, the Honour Blade and the Symbols of Office. But these are ritual weapons mainly used to denote rank rather than for actual combat. It is the Ethereals role to lead and inspire, not so much to fight themselves, even if they are perfectly capable of doing so should the need arise.

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Character	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Honour Blade	(base contact)	Assault Weapons	Extra Attacks (+1)	



*Notes: Character, Invulnerable Save, Leader. A formation joined by an Ethereal becomes Fearless. If the Ethereal is killed then the formation breaks automatically.*

## SHAS'EL COMMANDER

Shas'el, the second highest rank of the Shas, are Tau military commanders of the Fire Caste. They are experienced both in battle and in commanding troops, and usually lead by example. All Fire Caste warriors of rank Shas'vere or higher are equipped with a Crisis Battlesuit, and they actually employ it to support their army in battle, unlike most Imperial officers. They are seasoned fighters and expert suit pilots, making them a fearsome prospect at short ranges as they lead their Ta'ro'cha into attacks. Tau make almost no use of close combat weapons, instead the most traditional officer weapon is the Plasma Rifle. They are also often supported by accompanying shield drones, which protect them from enemy attacks.

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Character	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Commander's Plasma Rifle	30cm	AP4+	-	



*Notes: Character, Coordinated Fire, Leader.*

## SHAS'O COMMANDER

Shas'o is the highest rank that a Fire Caste member can attain. Only those Shas'el who have proven themselves worthy by repeated success in the field are considered for promotion. Shas'o not only lead a Cadre, they are the supreme commanders for an entire Tau army and co-ordinate entire campaigns and planetary annexations. Furthermore, they are battle-scarred warriors, supremely dangerous opponents in their XV8 Crisis Battlesuit. They have similar weapons and equipment to the slightly junior Shas'el, but their rank and importance often means that they have access to more non-standard equipment, like several different hard-wired support systems, shield generators or upgraded weapon systems.

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Character	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Commander's Plasma Rifle	30cm	AP4+	-	



*Notes: Character, Coordinated Fire, Leader. The Shas'o allows the Tau player to re-roll one failed initiative test (of any type) per turn.*

### FIRE WARRIOR TEAM

The indisputable mainstays of any Tau army, Fire Warriors or Shas'la are solid and dependable core troops. They are well armoured and equipped with deadly Pulse Rifles and Pulse Carbines, which provide them with a definitive edge over almost any other type of infantry in ranged combat. They are certainly not the fastest, bravest or most endurable troopers by nature, but their technology and extensive training goes a long way to counter any biological disadvantage they might have compared to Humans or Orks. The result is proficiently deadly infantry. Shas'la are equally capable of stout defence with their accurate, long-ranged Pulse Rifles or fighting up close using Pulse Carbines with built-in Photon Grenade launchers. Together with their tightly-knit nature and mutual support attitude, they are a force to be reckoned with.

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Infantry	15cm	5+	6+	5+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Pulse Rifles	30cm	AP4+	-	
Pulse Carbines	15cm	AP5+	Disrupt	



**Notes:**

### PATHFINDER TEAM

Compared to the Fire Warriors, Tau Pathfinders have a more specialised role on the battlefield. The Markerlight, their main weapon, is not a weapon as such, but instead used to electronically mark enemy units and thus increase the accuracy of their fellow Tau against those targets. This concept of working for the Tau'va at the expense of personal glory is very prominent in Tau society (and also warfare) and makes Pathfinders very popular with other Tau units. In short, Pathfinders are out there to guide their comrade's aim, not to win the battle themselves.

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Infantry	15cm	5+	6+	5+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Rail Rifles	30cm	AP5+	Sniper	
Pulse Carbines	15cm	AP5+	Disrupt	



**Notes:** *Coordinated Fire, Markerlights, Scouts.*

### XV8 CRISIS BATTLESUIT TEAM

Of all weapon systems employed by the Tau, the Crisis Battlesuit is easily the most distinctive and recognisable. On the battlefields of the eastern rim, enemies have learned to identify and fear the shape of the XV8. It confers exceptional protection to the troopers within, as well as mounting a vast array of deadly weapons. The Crisis Battlesuits greatest strengths lie in mobility and short-ranged firepower, it is their role to get to the right place and take out the right targets. To this end, they are equipped with a selection of weapons that allow them to engage and damage anything the enemy might have; Crisis are there to tackle any units that the normal Shas'la teams cannot deal with.

Only seasoned veterans are granted the honour of donning a Crisis Battlesuit, fighting together as teams of three called Ta'ro'cha ('three minds, one purpose'). Becoming a Crisis pilot is the first step in becoming a Tau officer, which amply demonstrates the significance of the XV8 for the Fire Caste.

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Infantry	20cm	3+	5+	5+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Twin Missile Pods	45cm	AP5+/AT6+	-	
Twin Plasma Rifles	30cm	AP4+	-	
Twin Fusion Blasters	15cm	MW4+	-	



**Notes:** *Invulnerable Save, Tau Jetpacks.*

### XV15 STEALTH BATTLESUIT TEAM

Of all the various Battlesuit variants of the Tau, the XV15 Stealth is the smallest. A Tau in an XV15 is hardly larger than a Fire Warrior in standard armour; however this perfectly suits their role as infiltrators and saboteurs. In addition to the Tau Jet Pack, which is common to most Battlesuits, the Stealth suit has the unique capability of camouflaging its wearer. This is achieved by a number of holographic disruptors which are arrayed all over the suit and distort the wearer's form, blending him into the background like a high-tech chameleon.

Stealth teams range ahead of the main army, as 'lone wolves' of the Tau. They are encouraged to fight independently and have great autonomy within their mission parameters, as befits their style of fighting. They ambush enemy units and disrupt their supply lines, like vengeful ghosts striking at will.

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Infantry	20cm	5+	6+	5+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Silenced Burst Cannons	15cm	AP4+	Disrupt	



*Notes: First Strike, Markerlights, Reinforced Armour, Scouts, Tau Jetpacks, Teleport.*

### XV88 BROADSIDE BATTLESUIT

The XV88 is a variant of the Crisis, designed for long range heavy fire support. To this end, the standard Jet Pack has been removed and replaced with even thicker armour and even more, heavier weapons. The main weapon system of the Broadside are its twin-linked Railguns, linear particle accelerators capable of punching through virtually any amount of armour. The projectiles are accelerated to a substantial percentage of light speed and leave trails of fire where their passing has ignited the air. Only very few vehicles are able to withstand a direct hit without suffering critical damage. Broadsides are much more massive and slower than Crisis, so they take up the role of stationary fire support against enemy armoured threats. They are often employed in association with Fire Warriors to form defence lines or solid fire bases for the Tau advance.

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Light Vehicle	15cm	4+	6+	5+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Twin Railguns	75cm	AT3+	-	
Smart Missile System	30cm	AP5+	Ignore Cover	



*Notes: Reinforced Armour, Walker.*

### GUN DRONE SQUAD

Tau Gun Drones (Kor'vesa) are small, disc shaped, semi-sentient robots employed alongside Tau units in battle. They are equipped with a smaller and much modified Tau Jet Pack, which allows them to hover over the ground and fly over most obstacles. As weapons they carry twin-linked Pulse Carbines, a formidable weapon at short ranges. Drones are often controlled by a Tau warrior, acting as his robotic bodyguard. To be able to function independently, they need to combine their processors into a network, so only larger groups of Drones are able to fight on their own. However, their main use is not to fight, but to provide protection for Tau soldiers, especially Battlesuit pilots. Drones are programmed to protect Tau lives, by physically interposing themselves between the Tau and incoming fire or assailants.

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Infantry	20cm	5+	6+	5+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Twin Pulse Carbines	15cm	AP4+	Disrupt	



*Notes: Tau Jetpacks.*

### DEVILFISH TROOP CARRIER

The Devilfish is the trusty troop transport of the Fire Warriors and Pathfinders, able to carry a full squad of them into battle. It is relatively well armoured for a transport vehicle, but only has a single Burst Cannon for self defence. In addition, it mounts Gun Drones in special carriages on the sides, which can be detached in battle to provide support for disembarking teams. It is based on the same chassis as the Hammerhead, but the greatest part of the tank has been reconfigured to passenger space.

It is used to carry infantry to the front, or to evacuate them when the enemy threatens to overwhelm their position. Considering the Tau military's reliance on mobility in battle, the Devilfish is a key element of their armed forces.

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Armoured Vehicle	30cm	5+	6+	6+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Burst Cannon & Gun Drones	15cm	AP5+	-	
Seeker Missiles	90cm	AT6+	Guided Missiles	



*Notes: Skimmer, Transport (Two Fire Warrior or Pathfinder units).*

### HAMMERHEAD GUNSHIP

The Hammerhead is the main battle tank of the Tau Fire Caste, like the Leman Russ for the Imperial Guard and the Predator for the Space Marines, and it is a close match for both. Unlike its Imperial counterparts, it is not a tracked vehicle, but a skimmer, which allows it to pass over difficult terrain with impunity. Despite this, it is heavily armoured and carries a lethal amount of firepower.

Its main weapon systems are a Railgun, Ion Cannon or Twin Fusion Cannons, with self-guiding Smart Missiles as back-up. The Hammerhead mounted Railgun differs from the one mounted on Broadside Battlesuits in that it can fire a solid slug or a bundle of sophisticated submunitions, which can prove deadly against massed infantry. The Ion Cannon is a very versatile weapon, with a high rate of fire and advanced targeting systems. More recently Twin Fusion Cannons have been employed for close infantry support.

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Armoured Vehicle	30cm	4+	6+	5+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Smart Missile System	30cm	AP5+	Ignore Cover	
Seeker Missiles	90cm	AT6+	Guided Missiles	



**Plus one from the following**

Hammerhead Railgun	75cm	AP5+/AT4+	-	
Ion Cannon	60cm	AP4+/AT5+	-	
Twin Fusion Cannons	30cm	MW4+	-	

*Notes: Skimmer.*

### SKYRAY AIR DEFENCE GUNSHIP

The Skyray is the primary Tau ground-based air defence. Based on the Hammerhead but instead of mounting a main gun in the turret it is fitted with a Hunter Missile Launcher and Markerlights to acquire enemy aircraft. Its targeting systems are very sophisticated and allow it to send Hunter missiles with enormous accuracy against low-flying aircraft from great distances.

It also carries Seeker Missiles which can be employed versus armoured ground targets with good effect, as its targeting systems allow for quick re-calibration. It is therefore reliable in both a tank hunter and air defence capacity and has become indispensable for the Tau military against opponents with a strong airforce, like the Imperium of Man.

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Armoured Vehicle	30cm	5+	6+	6+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Smart Missile System	30cm	AP5+	Ignore Cover	
2 x Hunter Missiles	60cm	AA5+	-	
2 x Seeker Missiles	90cm	AT6+	Guided Missiles	



*Notes: Markerlights, Skimmer.*

### TETRA LIGHT SKIMMER

The Tetra is a two seated light skimmer, similar to the Piranha, but crewed by Pathfinders. Its armament, in the form of Pulse Rifles, is considerably weaker, but it is equipped with markerlights as recompense. Thus it can fulfil the same role as Pathfinders on foot, and its extra speed and mobility come in very handy in certain circumstances, for example as the recon section for an armoured cadre. Still it is a rather rare occurrence with most Tau armies, as it's still a relatively new piece of equipment. They are also employed under difficult battlefield conditions, where their mobility and smaller size allows them to go where regular Pathfinder units in their Devilfish would find the going extremely difficult.

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Light Vehicle	35cm	5+	6+	6+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Tetra Pulse Rifles	30cm	AP6+	-	



**Notes:** *Coordinated Fire, Markerlights, Scouts, Skimmer.*

### PIRANHA LIGHT SKIMMER

The Piranha is a military adaptation of a two-seated, open topped light skimmer normally only employed in civilian roles. It has had some armour added, as well as the light armament of a Burst Cannon and detachable Gun Drones, identical to those mounted on a Devilfish. It is mostly being employed for reconnaissance duties, as a platform for launching Seeker missiles, or when there is a lack of battlesuits or vehicles, mostly on sparsely populated colonies.

In the regular army cadres from the main Septs, which do not lack such equipment, they are traditionally employed only to a lesser extent. However, they have proven to be a real asset to the normally small Tau formations. They are easy to produce and maintain and can be used to perform a plethora of different duties, with remarkable success.

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Light Vehicle	35cm	5+	6+	6+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Burst Cannon & Gun Drones	15cm	AP5+	-	
Seeker Missiles	90cm	AT6+	Guided Missiles	



**Notes:** *Skimmer.*

### KROOT MASTER SHAPER

Master Shapers are the leaders of Kroot kindred's; they oversee the genetic development of their kindred as well as making any important decisions together with the other senior Shapers of the tribe. Their main duty is to lead their tribe to new prey species that can be assimilated into the Kroot genome so that the kindred evolves, gaining new abilities and traits (hence the designation of 'Shaper'). Kroot normally hire themselves out as mercenaries, and it is the Master Shaper's business to negotiate the terms of the contract with their employers. They also lead their tribe in battle, using their superior physiology, numerous evolutionary adaptations (enhanced reflexes, being able to spit venom, etc.) as well as the exotic and deadly weaponry gifted by their employers in exchange for their service.

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Infantry	15cm	6+	4+	5+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Mercenary Weapons	(base contact)	Assault Weapons	Extra Attacks (+1)	
Kroot Rifles	(15cm)	Small Arms	-	

**Notes:** *Infiltrators, Leader, Scouts.*

### KROOT WARRIOR SQUAD

Kroot are a relatively primitive race, but excellent infiltration and close combat troops. Their arboreal origins make them experts in fieldcraft, as well as tracking and ambushing enemies in dense terrain. Though Kroot are fierce and skilled fighters in close combat and short-ranged firefights, they lack armour and must rely on the protection of their surroundings. They fight using their Kroot rifles, originally very primitive but now adapted and upgraded by the Tau Earth Caste. The rifle may also be used in close combat, where the numerous blades attached to it make it an effective weapon.

They are carnivorous and devour their victims after battle; believing this will confer their enemy's strength and courage to them. In fact, they are able to assimilate part of their prey's genetic make-up and learn new abilities in this way or even provoke artificial evolutionary leaps. But unsurprisingly, this behaviour is a constant cause of friction between them and the Tau, who deeply despise such acts of savagery.

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Infantry	15cm	-	4+	5+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Kroot Rifles	(15cm)	Small Arms	-	



*Notes: Infiltrators, Scouts.*

### KROOT HOUND PACK

Kroot Hounds are a different evolutionary branch of the Kroot Carnivores, a Kroot form that has evolved into a four-legged hunting beast. Hounds are exceptionally ferocious and vicious and need handlers to take care of them, lest they turn on other Kroot or Tau. This makes them somewhat troublesome to take along into battle and is the reason why they are singularly detested by the Tau.

They are a very animalistic, non-sentient life form exclusively used for battle and hunting purposes. They cannot make use of weapons or equipment, but their sharp fangs are adequate for tearing apart enemies in close combat and mercilessly pursuing any survivors.

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Infantry	15cm	-	3+	-
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Fangs	(base contact)	Assault Weapons	-	



*Notes: Infiltrators, Scouts.*

### KROOTOX HERD

Krootox are another Kroot form that has evolved from the main branch of the humanoid Carnivores. They are stuck at a lower level of evolutionary development, being essentially lumbering herbivores. However, they have a strong bond to their Kroot masters and will fight alongside them savagely in battle.

The Kroot lash a heavy weapon version of their Kroot Rifles, the Kroot Gun, to the Krootox's back so they gain some sort of fire support for their kindred. Krootox are very large and strong and can rip apart most enemies in close combat, while able to absorb heavy blows in return.

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Infantry	15cm	4+	4+	4+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Kroot Guns	45cm	AP5+/AT6+	-	
Claws	(base contact)	Assault Weapons	Extra Attacks (+1)	



*Notes:*

## BARRACUDA FIGHTER

The Barracuda is the Tau standard fighter plane employed by the Kor (Air) Caste for space and aerial combat missions. It carries a wide array of weapons and is therefore able to attack enemy aircraft as well as ground targets, however historically its main role has been for combat air patrol to secure air superiority.

It is a very agile and manoeuvrable craft, and the Tau Air Caste pilots are physiologically better adapted to air and space combat than most other races, as they spend practically their entire life in space or at least airborne. Until the introduction of the Skyray Gunship, the Barracudas have been solely responsible for air defence of Fire Caste ground forces.

It is only recently that they are slowly being adapted to other roles as well, such as ground support. Fitted with twin Missile Pods combined with the deadly Ion Cannon they have become a feared sight amongst enemy ground troops, while still able to act as an extremely effective interceptor when needed.

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Aircraft	Fighter	6+	-	-
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Ion Cannon	30cm	AP4+/AT5+/AA5+	Fixed Forward Arc	
Twin Burst Cannons	15cm	AA6+	-	
Twin Missile Pods	45cm	AP5+/AT6+	Fixed Forward Arc	



*Notes:*

## TIGER SHARK

The Tiger Shark is not a dedicated bomber, but fulfils the dual role of bomber and drone transport craft. In addition to its usual weapons, its bays can hold a great number of Gun Drones that can be dispersed during flight. This allows the Tau to drop small formations of (relatively expendable) troops behind enemy lines where they can sow confusion, simulate offensives and generally cause havoc.

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Aircraft	Bomber	4+	-	-
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Twin Ion Cannons	30cm	AP3+/AT4+/AA4+	Fixed Forward Arc	
Twin Burst Cannons	15cm	AA6+	-	
Twin Missile Pods	45cm	AP5+/AT6+	Fixed Forward Arc	



*Notes: Transport (Three Gun Drone units). Transported Gun Drone formations may be split across multiple Tiger-sharks as an exception to the normal aircraft transport rules. The Tiger shark cannot land, make an Engagement, or embark units, but can disembark transported Drones after an approach move. The Drone formation may shoot when it disembarks as normal (see 4.2.5), and counts as having activated for that turn. After this initial deployment the Gun Drones are a completely independent formation. Gun Drones being transported by Tiger Sharks do not generate blast markers for being destroyed until after they are disembarked.*

## TIGER SHARK AX-1-0 VARIANT

A more recent variant of the Tiger Shark, jointly developed by the Earth and Air Castes in secret, replaces the drone racks and Ion cannons with two Railcannons. These massive weapons, usually mounted on support craft, turn the Tiger Shark into a formidable ground attack strike craft, capable of engaging and destroying super heavy tanks and Titans.

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Aircraft	Bomber	4+	-	-
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Twin Railcannons	45cm	MW3+	Fixed Forward Arc, Titan Killer (D3)	
Twin Burst Cannons	15cm	AA6+	-	
Twin Missile Pods	45cm	AP5+/AT6+	Fixed Forward Arc	
Aircraft Seeker Missiles	45cm	AT6+	Guided Missiles	



*Notes:*

## ORCA DROPSHIP

The Orca is a dropship, normally used to carry Tau troops from orbiting spacecraft to a planet's surface. It relies more on its massive engine power than aerodynamics to keep it airborne, as it is usually dropped from larger craft and only uses thrusters to slow its descent. Tau planetary landings can take the form of a massive, concerted drop of whole cadres, or the insertion of small, infiltrating teams into enemy held territory.

To fulfil this role of troop shuttle, the Orca has a large transport capacity and can even hold the larger battlesuits. However, it is only lightly armoured and is not particularly suited for combat drops during battle, where it runs the risk of being shot down. Usually, any landing zone is prepared either by bombardment from other aircraft or infiltrators on the ground, so the Orca can disembark its cargo in relative safety.

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
War Engine, Aircraft	Bomber	4+	6+	6+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Twin Burst Cannons	15cm	AA6+	-	
Twin Missile Pods	45cm	AP5+/AT6+	-	
Aircraft Seeker Missiles	45cm	AP5+/AT6+	Guided Missiles	



*Damage Capacity 2. Critical Hit Effect: The Orca and all units aboard are destroyed in a spectacular explosion.*

*Notes: Planetfall, Transport (up to twelve: Fire Warriors, Pathfinders, Stealth, Crisis, Gun Drones, Broadsides, Kroot Warriors, Kroot Master Shaper and Kroot Hounds. Crisis units take up two slots each).*

## MANTA DROPSHIP

Instead of Titans, Tau make use of small spacecraft as heavy support units to their battle lines. Fighting so close to the surface, the greatest part of their energy must be expended to keep them airborne, so they are not capable of fast manoeuvres once they are committed to ground combat. The ubiquitous Manta Missile Destroyer is the most commonly used of these, and can be employed as transport craft to land troops as well as dedicated support craft. Its firepower a match for the largest Imperial Titans or Ork Gargants, as it sports Heavy Railcannons as a main armament, as well as Heavy Ion Phalanxes, Missile Pods, Seeker Missiles and smaller defence weapons for close range.

The Manta is also widely employed in space engagements as a bomber craft, where it is designated as a 'Missile Destroyer'. In addition to its impressive armament, the Manta can transport a full fighting Cadre with support vehicles into battle and deploy them under heavy covering fire. It is heavily constructed with reinforced armour and even has a powerful deflector shield (similar to those installed on larger Tau Spacecraft) to absorb incoming fire.

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
War Engine	20cm	5+	-	4+
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
Twin Heavy Railcannons	90cm	MW2+	Fixed Forward Arc, Titan Killer (D3)	
3 x Heavy Ion Phalanx	75cm	AP3+/AT4+	Fixed Forward Arc	
4 x Twin Manta Burst Cannons	30cm	AP5+/AA6+	-	
Twin Missile Pods	45cm	AP5+/AT6+	Fixed Forward Arc	
2 x Seeker Missiles	90cm	AT6+	Guided Missiles	



*Damage Capacity 8. Critical Hit Effect: The Tau Deflector Shield is knocked offline and may not be used for the remainder of the game. Further critical hits cause an additional point of damage.*

*Notes: Fearless, Markerlights, Planetfall, Reinforced Armour, Support Craft, Tau Deflector Shield, Transport (up to twenty: Fire Warriors, Pathfinders, Stealth, Gun Drones, Crisis, Broadsides, Kroot, Kroot Master Shaper, Kroot Hounds, Krootox. Crisis units take up two slots each. In addition the Manta may carry four vehicles of the following types: Devilfish, Hammerhead, Skyray, Piranha or Tetra. Three Tetras may be carried in each vehicle slot).*

### HERO CLASS CRUISER (LAR'SHI), VASH'YA CONFIGURATION

In the Kor'vattra Ileath'fannor (Commerce and Exploration Fleet) a fleet of starships which has served the Empire since its first expansion into space, the Lar'shi (Hero) is the pinnacle of modular Tau stellar technology. Designed as a match for Imperial ships of the line, it is a powerful gunship capable of facing most cruiser-sized opposition in space, being the first large starship the Tau built for the sole purpose of combat. In addition to its numerous weapon systems, it has troop transport capabilities and can deploy several Orca dropships or Manta Missile Destroyers by Planetfall.

In keeping with the Shas'ar'tol's and Kor'vattra's shared concept of surgical warfare, Tau starships eschew the massed orbital bombardments used by other races in support of ground forces. They have no wish to destroy what they are fighting for and take great effort to avoid friendly fire accidents and collateral damage; instead they employ multiple deadly accurate pin-point attacks to take out enemy war engines.

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Spacecraft	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
2 x Pin-point attack	n/a	MW2+	Titan Killer (D3)	



*Notes: Transport (may carry up to 6 Orcas plus any troops carried in them. Mantas and any embarked troops can also be carried but count as 3 Orcas for transport purposes).*

### CUSTODIAN CLASS BATTLESHIP (OR'ES EL'LEATH)

The recent rapid expansion of the Tau Empire placed significantly increased pressure on the Kor'vattra, the Tau fleet. The Kor'vattra's early setbacks against the Imperial Navy during the Lithesh War, as well as the emerging threat of the Tyranid splinter fleets, had called the Kor'vattra's prior engagement tactics into question. The very best Fio (Earth) Caste scientists of the Tau Sept were tasked with developing the program known as the Kor'or'vesh, incorporating new technologies and combat doctrines into a new series of starships.

The Or'es El'Leath (Custodian) battleship is the largest starship class of this new generation of Tau vessels. It is a huge carrier, transporting squadrons of Barracuda fighters, Orca Dropships and Manta Missile Destroyers, which it can deploy in support of the Kor'vattra Qath'fannor (the Commerce Protection Fleet). It is equally adept when tasked with providing close support to planetary landings or ground-based campaigns, as in addition to the aerospace assets it provides, it is armed with powerful Gravitic Launchers, capable of sending waves of Tracer Missiles to the surface, guided to their targets by Markerlight armed ground units, this allows it to target enemy formations with an incredible degree of accuracy.

Type	Speed	Armour	Close Combat	Firefight
Spacecraft	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Weapon	Range	Firepower	Notes	
2 x Gravitic Tracer Salvo	n/a	3 x MW4+	Guided Missiles	



*Notes: Transport (may carry up to 18 Orcas plus any troops carried in them. Mantas and any embarked troops can also be carried but count as 3 Orcas for transport purposes). Each of the two tracer salvos may be fired at a different ground formation, of any type.*

## DESIGN NOTES

**Tau Drones:** The effect of Drones is often 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 pulse weapons used by Tau infantry, and the presence of Shield Drones accounts for the higher than average armour values of Tau infantry and Tau battlesuits.

**Tau Miniatures:** The Epic Tau miniatures range is available from ForgeWorld. You can find out more about the Forge World range at their website: [www.forgeworld.com](http://www.forgeworld.com).

**Basing Tau Units:** Crisis Battlesuits and Krootox should be mounted 2-4 to a base. Fire Warriors, Pathfinders, Stealth, Gun Drones, Kroot, Kroot Hounds, Kroot Master Shapers are based as regular infantry. All other units are based individually. Feel free to add a Drone to infantry and Battlesuit stands, as well as light vehicle bases and armoured vehicles, if you wish. The Broadside unit assumes a single battlesuit accompanied by controlled shield drones.

**Firefight Values:** This has come up a number of times, and so it would be a good idea to set out the reasoning for this. The Tau in Epic Armageddon have low firefight values, and strengthened ranged firepower, as compared to their Warhammer 40,000 incarnation. This seems counter-intuitive to some players. This has been implemented to reflect the 'stand off' nature of the Tau battle plan, and to encourage the use of stand-off fire exchanges. While it is true that the standard side arms of other races equates to a high firefight value, they also have various other weapons at their disposal, such as grenades and pistols. In addition, high firefight values are equally good in anti-armour assaults, which is not something that the Fire Warriors excel at. In addition, high firefight values would make the Tau a strong assaulting force.