

ROGUE TRADER™

TAU CHARACTER GUIDE



THE WARRIORS OF THE GREATER GOOD
IN THE KORONUS EXPANSE

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FOR THE GREATER GOOD

"Our paths are one, Gue'la. I shall lend my strength to yours, until such a time as you no longer serve the Greater Good."

—Shas'o Boh'mha

A machine is only as strong as its weakest component, and the machine that is the Tau Empire grows strong indeed off the foundation of ensuring every cog slots into the perfect place. Rather than founding itself off ancient tradition, veneration of a god, or some bestial desire for war, the small but growing empire draws its strength from the abstract concept of the "Tau'va," or "Greater Good." The ideal of putting the group and society as a whole before any single individual drives every action, and has enabled the rapid growth and rampant success that the Tau have achieved in adding both territories and new races to what they believe is the manifest destiny of the galaxy: all united, serving the Greater Good.

THROUGH UNITY, PROSPERITY FOR ALL

A relatively recent addition to the galactic tapestry, the Tau have only just begun to carve their empire out of the Eastern Fringe. A thriving species possessed of remarkable unity of vision and unmatched technological innovation, the Tau have burst from their home world, constructing, colonising, and conquering footholds for themselves throughout the eastern reaches of the galactic plane. As the Tau spread explosively outward, their expeditions came into contact with a myriad of other species. Whether through diplomacy, duplicity, or violence, the Tau have had little need to slow their expansion, as each new species has fallen to their guns, or been seduced into the Empire's philosophy of the "Greater Good."

In their distant past, the Tau were divided into rival clans that had descended into an unending war that threatened to consume the planet. The seemingly miraculous appearance of the Ethereal caste, bringing with them the concept of the Tau'va, finally ended the generational feuds and united all Tau under a common cause. Rather than intermingling the clans, the Ethereal instead chose to keep them separate and assign each to tasks that utilised their strengths. The fierce and physically strong plainwalkers became the Fire caste, warriors for the growing empire. The sturdy valley dwellers excelled at building and innovation, and became the Earth caste. The winged mountain people used their superior mobility as messengers and eventually pilots, and received the name Air caste. The final group, gifted with great verbal skills, lent themselves to positions of business, bureaucracy, and diplomacy, earning the title of the Water caste. And ever did the Ethereal class remain in positions of authority, dispensing wisdom and guidance and ensuring all strove towards universal prosperity.

The tenet of finding the best use for a given group's skills and talents burned strong as the Tau developed the ability to reach the stars, and in their travels met other races and worlds

WHAT IS THE TAU CHARACTER GUIDE?

This product provides **ROGUE TRADER** players with all the necessary information and rules to play Tau Explorers. Included in this supplement is a concise history of the Tau Empire, rules to play Tau Warriors of the Fire Caste, and an armoury from which to outfit characters with the advanced technology of the Tau.

far unlike their own. In each case, Water caste members first attempted to diplomatically integrate the aliens into the Tau Empire, promising great boons in technology and a chance to help further the cause of the Greater Good. The diplomats were often successful, and in cases where they were not, the warriors of the Fire caste were always prepared to lend their expertise, honed by endless training, in achieving a satisfactory end to the negotiations. In such a manner, the Tau added not only new worlds to their empire, but also new species who supplemented and added to the strength of the whole.

The Tau Empire has thus far seen three periods of rapid growth, known as Spheres of Expansion, and although none were without problems, each was on the whole successful. The Tau themselves remain first amongst equals in their empire, and seek to instil the core tenets of the Greater Good in all the vassal races. The idea of giving one's all for the good of the whole, even up to literal self-sacrifice, lies ever at the forefront in the mind of all Tau, and drives and defines their actions. Such behaviour often baffles outsiders, but to the Tau the comfort of the implicit knowledge of what drives their comrades is a luxury few other races in the galaxy can enjoy.

BODY AND SOUL

The Tau themselves appear humanoid in size and shape, but their blue skin colouring making them quickly differentiable from humans. They have rather flat faces, wide eyes, and often lack hair other than the occasional warrior's braid. Their two-toed feet make another marked distinction from the form of Mankind. Their lifespans are typically shorter than a human's, especially those with access to juvenats and other medical luxuries enjoyed by Rogue Traders and other such Imperial luminaries, although a rare few have found ways to extend their lives well beyond the norm.

Due to a long history of a rigidly enforced caste system, physical appearance can easily inform a viewer as to a given Tau's role and position within society. For instance, members of the Fire caste include the strongest and largest of the Tau, whereas Air caste members showcase taller and lighter physiques more apt for piloting and space travel. Certain mental traits often exist alongside the physical commonalities within a caste, although whether that is due to physical qualities or societal standards is up for debate. Nevertheless, Water caste members find themselves naturally able to charm others and learn languages, while Earth caste inventors and builders display a natural affinity to improve and innovate. Furthermore, individual Tau often possess certain traits that make their home world of origin easily identifiable, chief of which is the exact hue of their blueish skintone, which varies based on proximity of the world to the sun.

In addition to such physical differences, the Ethereal caste also seems to exude a natural presence of some sort that inspires loyalty, obedience, and often hope in members of the other castes. What this stems from or the reasons behind it have never been adequately explained, and the Tau themselves seem little inclined to pursue research on this particular topic.

PROGRESS UNOPPOSED

The Tau Empire has enjoyed its rapid advances and numerous victories in large part due to its technology. Historically, the Tau evolved biologically and developed technology at a rate far exceeding most species in the galaxy, a phenomenon that still begs an explanation. Because of this, they view their technology as a tool to be constantly refined, updated, and improved as needed. Unlike, for instance, humanity or the Eldar, they do not feel constrained by the practices of the past, and view their weapons, vehicles, and the like in an entirely ordinary light.

The Tau already enjoy a level of technological sophistication superior to most other races in the galaxy, and furthermore even understand the science behind it. To further this advantage, members of the Earth caste seek always to improve, and new prototypes are constantly being developed and deployed to ensure the Fire and Air castes constantly have a technological edge on the ever-changing battlefields the Tau face. Alongside devastating weapons and agile vehicles, the Tau also commonly employ sophisticated artificial intelligences, often in the form of drones. Although regularly used alone or in small groups by a single Tau giving them direct instructions, the level of refinement of the AIs allows groups of drones to be slaved together, and their gestalt intelligence enables them to undertake complex assignments and independent operation.

Such advances do not exist without accompanying perils, since by their nature prototypes do not always work as intended. The Tau view such risks as acceptable. For instance, the initial development of larger-scale battlesuits resulted in numerous injuries and fatalities to test pilots, in particular hazards associated with early miniaturised nova reactors. However, such sacrifices were deemed valuable in light of the final product, the mighty XV104 “Riptide” battlesuit, a development that was able to swing the tides of war on the planet Agrellan and many worlds thereafter.

The Tau inherently do not understand mankind’s mistrust and mysticism towards technology; after all, even the most advanced devices are simply tools to be wielded. While they have no problem using foreign products in times of necessity, they always prefer the weapons and accessories they themselves have manufactured, for reasons of safety, reliability, and, of course, lethality.

VICTORY ON THE HORIZON

While still on their home world, the Tau’s rapidly developing and enlarging population began to feel constrained. The Ethereals guided their people towards the obvious solution: the stars, and other planets. Thus began the millennium-long First Sphere Expansion, starting with the neighbouring planet of Tau’n and quickly encompassing all the systems in close proximity of the planet T’au. These eight systems, also known as Septs, were acquired relatively successfully, although this expansion also marked the first contact what would become a perennial enemy

in the form of Orks. It also marked, however, first contact with the Kroot, who would become closely bonded as allies of the Tau and fellow servants of the Greater Good.

The Second Sphere Expansion’s beginning was heralded by extraordinary advances in space travel, with Earth caste engineers developing near-light speed space flight. Led by the luminary Ethereal Aun’wei, this period brought a dozen new Septs into the empire’s boundaries. This age also allowed the now-legendary Commander Puretide to demonstrate his tactical brilliance, delivering numerous remarkable victories for his people. He would go on to train some of the other most famous Fire caste members, such as Commander Shadowsun and the infamous Commander Farsight, and his trainings and strategies would forever influence Fire caste war doctrine.

The end of the Second Sphere Expansion marks perhaps the most tumultuous time in the empire’s history. After crossing the Damocles Gulf, the Tau came into contact with the Imperium of Man for the first time. Their gentle encroachment into Imperial space was met with the fierce and militaristic response typical of humanity, and the Tau experienced warfare on a scale and brutality unlike any they had previously encountered. Forced into a major retreat for the first time in the history of the Spheres of Expansion, the Fire caste was forced to reconsider its tactical strategies and adapt to this new foe. A plan developed by Ethereal Aun’Va and executed by Commander Farsight enabled the Tau to quickly retake their lost worlds. Victory was all but complete until two major setbacks: Farsight’s sudden and unexplained disappearance into what would be named the Farsight Enclave, and an immense Waaagh! by Ork forces crashing into Tau space.



The dynamic Commander Shadowsun quickly filled the void left vacant by Farsight, and repelled the fiendish Orks. Bolstered by the victory and new advances in technology, Aun'Va announced the beginning of the Third Sphere Expansion, aiming far further and wider than either of the previous endeavours. Armed with both tactical insight into the Imperium and armed with the latest and greatest in Tau weaponry, Shadowsun rapidly smashed through every defence the Imperium was able to throw at her. With multiple former Imperial worlds now under Tau control, the ponderous machine that is the Imperium has yet to react, but thus far the Tau see little reason to expect anything less than the extraordinary success they have enjoyed in their previous expansions.

SPREADING THE GREATER GOOD TO ALL

An individual Tau differs greatly from most members of the Imperium. From birth, Tau are instilled with a sense of purpose, and the nature of Tau society ensures that existential crises and other such psychological issues common in other races never become a problem. A Tau simply knows it is his duty to add to the group as a whole, and do what he can do to the best of his ability.

Unlike the Imperium, a Tau finds differences and technology as things to be embraced, rather than feared or shunned. Tau recognise other species as possessing different traits and abilities, but rather than being shameful, these differences are simply ways to contribute to the Greater Good that the Tau themselves cannot. To the Tau, the concept of xenophobia is itself alien. Certainly some species are not amiable to the Greater Good and cannot be assimilated, but every alien must be given a chance to make the choice. Technology, for its part, is simply a tool that has its uses, and most Tau possess at least an elementary understanding of its workings. As such, the Tau do not fear or venerate the items they use on a daily basis.

Of course, how a Tau expresses all these facets of his or her personality can vary wildly. All serve the Greater Good, but this does not mean that the Tau Empire is utterly homogenous. Various Sept worlds maintain a reputation for producing Tau of certain personalities, such as the particularly aggressive warriors from Vior'la or the brilliant academics of Bork'an. A Tau travelling as part of a Rogue Trader's crew may have joined for a variety of reasons. Perhaps he views it as a chance to expose new people to the tenets of the Greater Good in the sincere hope to better their lives. He may be on a fact-finding and intelligence mission to better understand what the Tau Empire has identified as one of its most dangerous foes, and treats his allies as specimens to be examined rather than long-term allies. She might be a member of the redacted Farsight Enclaves, disillusioned with the Greater Good and seeking new insight into the galaxy.

Regardless of their background, a Tau Explorer will likely place a great emphasis on both group unity and furthering the cause of his party. Who exactly encompasses this group, and what she views as the group's purpose, however, may change radically from individual to individual, particularly since this Explorer has attached herself to a Rogue Trader vessel. If these newfound allies manage to acquire the trust and loyalty of their Tau companion, though, they will likely be met with a level of dedication never before experienced, and a willingness to do whatever it takes without hesitation or regret. This comes not without its own cost, though, as the Tau will likely expect a similar level of allegiance in return, and the implicit assumption that the choices the leader makes will be wise ones.

Naming conventions are long and complex for outsiders. Tau are not born with a name, but rather earn and assemble theirs by achievements throughout their lifetimes. Such names typically include details such as home Sept, rank within society, and other such details alongside names granted for particular feats. Despite the commonly lengthy names, Tau are often referred to by a core name or simplified version, and Tau know to introduce themselves as such to species unfamiliar with their naming customs.

ALIEN PHYSIOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY

Tau are very different than humans, not just in body but also in mindset. Their fixation on the Greater Good and their optimistic view of the universe (despite all evidence to its capricious, cruel nature) make them just as alien as do their physical characteristics.

MEDICAL ATTENTION

Tau physiology is radically different from that of a human. Medicae Tests made by humans to heal Tau Explorers suffer a -10 penalty and, typically, human-made drugs have little effect on a Tau (and vice-versa). Similarly, human-made cybernetics must be properly modified to work alongside Tau physiology.

TAU AND CORRUPTION

The Tau are not affected by the presence of the Warp in the same way as humans are, and are far less attuned to the temptations offered by the Ruinous Powers. Tau Explorers still gain Corruption Points, but they do not gain Malignancies or Mutations from them as other Explorers do.

TAU AND INSANITY

Like most sentient species, Tau can become increasingly unhinged due to the psychological traumas inherent in living in the 41st Millennium. Tau Explorers suffer Insanity Points as normal. The GM should carefully consider the specific applications and manifestations of various disorders on Tau characters, and modify them as necessary. A Tau mind works differently than that of a human, and a Tau's cultural values are extremely far-removed from those held by most human Explorers.

TAU EXPLORERS

"Though I stride across strange stars, I trust that my actions are for the Greater Good."

—Orm'shen, Tau Explorer.

Tau believe in the tenets of the Greater Good, their guiding philosophy and the foundation of their budding empire. Tau Explorers might be warriors who wish to spread this philosophy to the stars of the Koronus Expanse, or might be outsiders who have other reasons to have passed through the Jericho Warp-gate. The adventure **TWILIGHT CRUSADE** offers GMs with an opportunity to introduce Tau Explorers into the party organically, as Commander Skyroar's hunter cadre and the Explorers share a common interest—finding the domain of the despicable renegade Vir Modren and seeing that he is vanquished.

The rules included in this supplement allow players to create their own Tau Explorers, and replace the usual rules for character creation in the **ROGUE TRADER** Core Rulebook. When building a Tau Explorer, a player first selects his character's Classified Competence, a special ability granted to the character that defines how he serves the fire caste. Then, the player generates the Characteristics that define the Explorer's personal attributes (see page 9). Finally, the player can proceed to spending starting xp. This process is described on page 30 of the **ROGUE TRADER** Core Rulebook, and uses the Advancement Tables of the Tau Fire Warrior Career (see page 12).

CLASSIFIED COMPETENCE

Tau culture places a high significance on each individual performing the role and actions that most benefit the Greater Good, and therefore seek to identify early on how each individual can best serve the Empire. A Tau Explorer must choose from one of the six following Classified Competencies at character creation:

ADEPT MACHINIST

The Tau have enjoyed success in large part due to their ever-developing and expanding technology. Although mostly the realm of the Earth caste, certain Fire Warriors feel a certain affinity to the weapons and gadgets they regularly employ and enjoy a superior understanding of such machines.

Whenever a Tau Explorer who chose this Classified Competence assists an allied Tau character with a Tech-Use Tests, he grants a +20 bonus rather than the normal +10 bonus.

DAUNTLESS BULWARK

Most Tau prefer to rely on their technology and ranged weaponry, but occasionally some Fire Warriors feel the savage call of more primal warfare in their blood. These Tau relish the occasional chance to engage in melee combat, especially when protecting their allies. Whenever a Tau Explorer who chose this Classified Competence makes a Charge Action against an enemy and hits with his attack, each allied Tau character currently engaged in melee with his target may make a Disengage Action as a Free Action.

EXEMPLAR OF UNITY

Although all Tau are equal, in following with the Greater Good, some Fire Warriors fall into positions of command. Unlike some other races, however, Tau commanders hold themselves to the same standards of those they lead. A Tau Explorer who chose this Classified Competence may make the Follow My Lead Action.

Follow My Lead

Type: Half Action

Subtypes: Concentration

Until the beginning of his next Turn, each allied Tau character within 10 metres who undertakes the same Half Action this Explorer performs after his Follow My Lead Action gains a +10 bonus to any Tests associated with that Action.

FINDER OF WAYS

Tau prefer working in groups and formations in order to use superior tactics and firepower, but coordinating intelligently require reconnaissance and intel. For this, the Tau rely on those who feel the calling to serve as Pathfinders or Stealth Suit pilots to scout ahead and report back to the main force.

Whenever a Tau Explorer who chose this Classified Competence succeeds on a Stealth Test, he grants each allied Tau character within 20 metres a +10 bonus to the next Stealth Test he makes this encounter.

PRECISE HUNTER

Although most Tau excel at ranged combat, certain Fire Warriors distinguish themselves at engaging at extreme ranges and firing with precision. In addition to their own experience, such individuals often lend their skills to improve the abilities of those around them.

A Tau Explorer who chooses this Classified Competence may make the Expose Weakness Action.

Expose Weakness

Type: Full Action

Subtypes: Attack, Concentration, Ranged

The Explorer makes a **Challenging (+0) Ballistic Skill Test**. If he succeeds, he chooses a Hit Location on his target (e.g. Head, Body, Left Arm, Right Arm, Left Leg, or Right Leg). Each allied Tau character who attacks the target may skip the Determine Hit Location Step of the attack and hit the declared Hit Location instead. Attacks against the target's Declared Hit Location gain +2 to Penetration, and an additional +1 to Penetration for each Degree of Success the Precise Hunter scored on his Ballistic Skill Test.

WINDSTRIDER

Although most large vehicles fall under the Air caste's purview, the Fire Caste still employs many smaller craft, most notably the wide variety of powerful battlesuits. Fire Warriors might find themselves piloting Battlesuits, Piranhas, or other such machines for a variety of reasons, but in all cases share the determination to utilise their vehicle to defend their allies.

Once per encounter, a Tau Explorer who chose this Classified Competence may spend a Reaction to make a Half Move Action while in a vehicle or battlesuit. If he ends this Move Action within three metres of a friendly Tau character, the next attack that would hit that ally this Turn instead hits the Windstrider, who relies on the vehicle or battlesuit's superior armour to absorb the blow.

HEIGHTENED SIGNIFICANCE

The Tau Explorer has proven himself to be a valued contributor to the Greater Good, and his survival has been marked as an important cog to continue to advance the empire. At the GM's discretion, acts of particular valour and contribution to the Greater Good can be rewarded with permanent honours to ensure the individual survives, further ensuring the prosperity of all. Some examples are listed below, but players and the GM are encouraged to work together to come up with their own appropriate boons.

AUTONOMOUS SAFEGUARD

The Tau Explorer has shown his worth on the battlefield, and the Tau Empire expects him to slay many foes in continued service. Accordingly, he is granted a drone controller (see page 24) and a drone equipped with a shield generator (see page 32) to follow and protect him.

SPECIAL-ISSUE PROTOTYPES

Particular displays of tactical expertise or strategic deployments attract the Tau Empire's eyes. The Tau Explorer is issued a particularly rare or powerful piece of weaponry in order to assist against those who would foolishly oppose the Greater Good.

MANTLE OF HEROES

Through some heroic feat or a history of valourous combat, the Tau Explorer has been deemed worthy of piloting a vaunted Tau battlesuit. Only the greatest of Fire Warriors are granted this honour, and such individuals are rightly

Tau Fire Warrior



WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
25	35	30	30	20	30	35	30	25

feared. Characters who prove themselves worthy in this way should be allowed to purchase the Pilot (Personal) Skill for 100 xp if they do not already have it, receive an appropriate battlesuit (see page 37), and may take the Pilot Alternate Career Rank when they reach the requisite Rank.

HONOUR GUARD

Such is the renown and importance of the Tau Explorer that a permanent bodyguard has been issued to continually stand by his side. The Explorer gains an honour guard of one or possibly more Fire Warriors who follow his every command, even to the death. If they are killed or otherwise lost, they are replaced at an appropriate moment as determined by the GM.

Movement: 2/4/6/12

Wounds: 13

Armour: Tau combat armour (6 All)

Total TB: 3

Skills: Awareness (Per), Command (Fel), Common Lore (Tau Empire) (Int), Dodge (Ag), Medicae (Int), Scholastic Lore (Tau War Doctrine) (Int) +10

Talents: Bonding Ritual, Combat Formation, Fire Caste Weapon Training, Greater than the Sum, Supporting Fire

Traits: For the Greater Good!

Weapons: Pulse rifle (Basic; 150m; S/2/4; 2d10+3 E; Pen 4; Clip 36; Reload Half; Gyro-Stabilised) or pulse carbine (Basic; 60m; S/-/3; 2d10+2 E; Pen 4; Clip: 24; Reload Half; Gyro-stabilised) or rail rifle (Basic; 150m; S/-/-; 2d10+3 I; Pen 4; Clip 12; Reload Full; Felling; Proven [3])

Equipment: 2 reloads for primary weapon, micro-bead, 2 Tau photon grenades

TAU CHARACTERISTICS

As with human characters, Tau Explorers also have Characteristics that their players generate at character creation. Unlike human Explorers, Tau have different base values for their Characteristics (see **Table 1–1: Tau Characteristics**).

Starting Wounds: Tau characters roll 1d5+2 and add twice their starting Toughness Bonus to the result to determine their starting number of Wounds.

Starting Fate Points: All Tau characters begin play with 1 Fate Point.

TABLE 1–1: TAU CHARACTERISTICS

Characteristic	2d10+
Weapon Skill	20
Ballistic Skill	25
Strength	20
Toughness	25
Agility	30
Intelligence	30
Perception	25
Willpower	25
Fellowship	25

TAU SKILLS

Tau Explorers bring with them a wealth of knowledge and experience. Indeed, in the far-flung reaches of the Koronus Expanse, the very existence of the Tau is all but a mystery. As such, Tau Explorers have access to the following new Skills:

COMMON LORE

(ADVANCED, INVESTIGATION)

Intelligence, Groups: Tau Empire

Tau Empire: This Skill includes knowledge of life in the Tau Empire, as relates to both the Tau species and the numerous other races that exist as vassals, allies, and auxiliaries within their domain.

SCHOLASTIC LORE

(ADVANCED, INVESTIGATION)

Intelligence, Groups: Tau Empire

Tau Empire: Beyond the basic facts and cultural cues of the Tau Empire, the complexities of Tau society often baffle even the most skilled xenographers. This Skill represents a knowledge of the structures, regulations, and hierarchies of Tau society on an academic level.

SPEAK LANGUAGE (ADVANCED)

Intelligence, Groups: Tau

Tau: The language of the Tau shares little with most human tongues, and can be difficult to master. Many Kroot learn it during their services as auxiliaries, just as they often learn Low Gothic when serving as mercenaries in the Koronus Expanse.

TAU TALENTS

“You show great progress, warrior of the Greater Good.”

—Aun’kor, Ethereal Caste.

The Tau are a culture truly alien to the citizens of the Imperium. Their ways of war are as mysterious as their day to day lives. As such, Tau Explorers have access to the following new Talents.

BLESSING OF THE ETHEREALS

Prerequisites: Willpower 40

At some point in life, this Explorer was blessed by an Ethereal for some worthy feat. In times of great peril, he is able to draw upon this memory to find reserves of strength and determination to soldier on when others would falter and fail.

Whenever the Explorer is suffering from Critical Damage, he is immune to the effects of Fear and Pinning, but disengaging from combat or backing down from a fight without a direct order from a superior requires a **Challenging (+0) Willpower Test**.

BONDING RITUAL

Prerequisites: Willpower 35

The ancient Fire caste ritual of Ta’lissera is often performed amongst close-knit groups of Tau Warriors, further solidifying their bond to one another and ensuring they will do absolutely anything to protect the group. Many warriors who undergo this rite carry a symbolic Bonding Knife as a sign of their pact.

As long as the Explorer is in a group containing another individual with this Talent, he feels empowered to fight on no matter the cost. The first time the Explorer suffers Critical Damage each encounter, if there is another character with this Talent within 20 metres, this Explorer automatically passes any Tests he is required to make by the Critical Effect and ignores any non-permanent effects that the Critical Effect would have (such as gaining Levels of Fatigue or being knocked Prone, but not losing a limb or being slain outright).

DISCIPLE OF KAUYON

Prerequisites: Bonding Ritual

The Tau war doctrine of Kauyon, otherwise known as the Patient Hunter, revolves around using one unit as bait to draw the enemy into a perfect trap.

A Tau Explorer with this Talent is skilled at acting as the bait in this tactic, and can perform the Perfect Lure Action.

Perfect Lure

Type: Full Action

Subtype: Movement, Fellowship

The Explorer makes a **Challenging (+0) Fellowship Test**.

If he succeeds, one enemy within 30 metres gains a +10 bonus to Weapon Skill and Ballistic Skill Tests to strike the Explorer and suffers a –30 penalty Weapon Skill and Ballistic Skill Tests for attacks made against the Explorer’s allies. For every Degree of Success he scores on the Test, he can affect one additional foe within range this way.

DISCIPLE OF MONT'KA

Prerequisites: Agility 40, Silent Move +10

The Tau war doctrine of Mont'ka, otherwise known as the Killing Blow, revolves around swiftly dealing a perfectly timed overwhelming blow to quickly eliminate a target.

Whenever the Explorer strikes an Unaware target, he inflicts additional Damage equal to his Degrees of Success on the Weapon Skill or Ballistic Skill Test.

ENVOY OF THE GREATER GOOD

Prerequisites: Fellowship 45, Charm +10

From long practice, the Tau Empire has established first contact practices that have served them well in establishing positive and productive relationships with new groups and species they encounter.

The Explorer permanently loses the Speak Not Unto The Alien Trait. Additionally, whenever this Tau Explorer meets an organisation or race that has not previously encountered Tau, he may spend a Fate Point and make a **Routine (+20) Charm Test**. If he succeeds, he gains a +10 bonus on all Interaction Skill Tests with this group for the remainder of the encounter. Furthermore, through this conversation, he is able to extract some important piece of information about the culture, group, or species with which he is speaking that might be helpful in subsequent dealings with the group (subject to the GM's discretion).

EXEMPLAR OF THE SELFLESS CAUSE

Prerequisites: Bonding Ritual, Command +10

This Tau has learned to truly lead by example, and his very action inspires his followers to achieve things they themselves did not know possible.

The Explorer gains the Follow My Lead Action, as per the Exemplar of Unity Classified Competency (see page 7). If he already possesses this ability, the bonus it provides increases to +20 (rather than +10).

FIRE CASTE WEAPON TRAINING

Prerequisites: None

This Explorer is proficient in the use of all Tau weaponry, and can wield these weapons without suffering the penalty for untrained weapon use.

FIRE SUPPORT

Prerequisites: Ballistic Skill 40, Fellowship 35

Tactical foresight, to the Tau, is often the key to victory, including ensuring the proper assets are in play to make victory certain.

Once per encounter, provided he is in a location where such assets are available and he is equipped with a markerlight, the Explorer may illuminate a target by making a **Challenging (+0) Ballistic Skill Test** as a Full Action.

If he succeeds, 1d5 Rounds later, minus 1 Round for each additional Degree of Success he scored on the Test (to a minimum of 1 round), a Seeker missile strikes the target dealing 3d10+5 Explosive damage with a Penetration of 10.

FURIOUS FUSILLADE

Prerequisites: Ballistic Skill 40, Crack Shot

Tau war doctrine encourages unrelenting hails of precision ranged fire to bring down their target.

Whenever this character succeeds on the Ballistic Skill Test for a Semi-Auto Attack Action or Full Auto Attack Action while benefitting from an Aim Action, he automatically scores an additional Degree of Success on the Test.

GREATER THAN THE SUM

Prerequisites: Fellowship 45, New Allies

The Tau doctrine of the Greater Good prescribes that each individual submits their best qualities to the whole. This often means that Tau are exposed to the finest qualities other individuals possess, and sometimes learn from their example.

Once per session, the Explorer may spend a Fate Point and either gain the benefits of a Talent an ally possesses or grant the benefits of a Talent he possesses to an ally. The character temporarily receiving the effects of the Talent need not meet its Prerequisites to benefit from it. This effect persists until the end of the encounter.

MASTER OF TECHNOLOGY

Prerequisites: Scholastic Lore (Tau Empire), Common Lore (War)

The Tau Explorer has intricate knowledge of the machinery and equipment his culture produces.

The Explorer may spend a Fate Point to automatically succeed on any Tech-Use Test with a number of Degrees of Success equal to his Intelligence Bonus.

NEW ALLIES

Prerequisites: Fellowship 30

This Fire Warrior has grown accustomed to working with xenos allies, whether these be Kroot mercenaries, Vespida warriors, Eldar wanderers, or even human Gue'va.

This Explorer's For the Greater Good!, Supporting Fire, and Classified Competency Traits, and any Talents he possesses that reference Tau characters can include any trusted ally (such as other Explorers), instead of only allied Tau characters.

STRENGTH THROUGH UNITY

Prerequisites: Fellowship 40, Bonding Ritual

Although normally weak in close combat, many Tau Warriors find additional strength when fighting alongside their allies.

When engaged in melee combat, for each ally with the Bonded Talent engaged with the same target, the Explorer gains an additional +5 bonus to Weapon Skill Tests and inflicts an additional 1 Damage with melee attacks.

SUPERIOR SUPPLY CHAIN

Prerequisites: None

The Explorer gains a +20 bonus to Acquisition Tests to acquire Tau weapons, wargear, and other equipment.

TAU TRAITS

Tau Explorers all begin play with the following Traits.

FOR THE GREATER GOOD!

The Tau value the group over the self, and further trust their comrades and commanders to always choose the best course of action. This enables every Tau to follow orders without hesitation or doubt.

Once per encounter, a Tau Explorer may gain a +10 bonus to a Test made while directly following an order from another Tau character. Additionally, if this order places the Explorer into substantial danger to benefit the group as a whole, this bonus increases to +30 (GM's discretion).

NON-IMPERIAL

This character was not raised among humans, and knows little about the culture and history of the Imperium. The laws, traditions, religion, and superstitions of Mankind are unfamiliar and alien to characters with this trait.

The character suffers a -10 penalty on all Common Lore, Forbidden Lore, and Scholastic Lore Tests relating to the Imperium of Man.

SPEAK NOT UNTO THE ALIEN

This creature is a member of an alien species that is viewed with a mixture of fear and loathing, and different enough in form and thought as to make any kind of social interaction a greater challenge.

This creature suffers a -20 penalty on all Fellowship-based Tests when dealing with humans, and imposes the same penalty on humans. These penalties do not apply when dealing with individuals who have become familiar with him. Finally, the presence of any xenos aboard a human vessel is unsettling for the crew. The continued presence of one or more xenos Explorers aboard a human ship reduces its morale by 2.

SUPPORTING FIRE

Prerequisites: None

Tau prefer ranged combat over barbaric melee, and seek to cut down their foes before they reach close combat.

Any time an enemy makes a Charge Action to become engaged in melee with an allied Tau character within 20 metres, this Explorer may spend his Reaction to make a Standard Ranged Attack at a -20 penalty against the enemy. This attack resolves before the target completes its Charge Action.

TACTICAL FLEXIBILITY

Prerequisites: Sprint, Scholastic Lore (Tau Empire)

Unlike many other races that the Tau Empire has encountered, the Tau find no fault in retreating from a hopeless situation in favour of saving strength for a better occasion.

Once per encounter, as a Half Action, the Explorer may make a **Challenging (+0) Scholastic Lore (Tau Empire) Test**. If he succeeds, he and each other Tau ally within 20 metres may immediately make a Disengage Action as a Free Action.

TECHNOLOGICAL INSIGHT

Prerequisites: Scholastic Lore (Tau Empire), Tech-Use +10 Innovation and study of strange new technologies is second nature to the Tau, and in the Koronus Expanse there are many technological mysteries indeed. This character seeks to turn the weapons of the enemy to the Greater Good at every opportunity.

When wielding a weapon for which he lacks the Ranged Weapon Training, Melee Weapon Training, or Exotic Weapon Training Talent, this character may make a **Challenging (+0) Tech-Use Test** as a Half Action. If he succeeds, he can operate the weapon without penalty (as if he had the appropriate Talent) for one Round, plus one additional Round per Degree of Success he scores on the Test.

TECHNOLOGY TRIUMPHANT

Prerequisites: Scholastic Lore (Tau Empire) +10 , Tech-Use +20

The Tau take much of their military strength from their ever-adapting technology, and use improvements and innovations to gain an edge on the battlefield.

Once per game session, this character may work to enhance a single piece of technology by making a **Hard (-20) Tech-Use Test**. If he succeeds, he permanently improves the Craftsmanship of the item from Poor to Common, Common to Good, or Good to Best. The amount of time this upgrade process takes varies by item, based on the GM's discretion (as obviously, modifying a plasma pistol is a smaller undertaking than completely reengineering a plasma drive).

THROUGH UNITY, DEVASTATION

Prerequisites: Ballistic Skill 45, Furious Fusillade, Command +20

A wise Tau commander knows the value of directing all available fire on a single high-value target and can discern how to strategically rip apart even massive foes with concentrated volleys.

An Explorer with this Talent may spend a Fate Point and make a **Challenging (+0) Ballistic Skill Test** as a Full Action. If he succeeds, he chooses a single target within range; that target is Marked for one round, plus one additional Round for every Degree of Success he scored on the Test. As long as the target is Marked, allied Tau characters who hit it with ranged attacks may roll twice for Damage, taking the higher result.

FIRE WARRIOR CAREER PATH

"Your training will be harsh. It will last a lifetime. It will be rigorous, meticulous, and all-encompassing. You will learn the lessons of the greatest minds the Fire caste has produced, but also how and when to use them. All of this will be so you can fight for the Greater Good, and likely perish in the process, but it will be an endeavour you will willingly embark on. And you will not be alone. You will ride into battle together, and you will die together. But you will be bonded Fire Warriors for life."

—Commander Blindsight to new initiates prior to the Ta'lissera ritual

The Fire caste is the military of the Tau Empire, and wages wars with the tools of tactical flexibility and superior weaponry. Those born into the Fire caste have a single destiny: to become warriors in the name of the Greater Good, and to spend their entire lives engaged in the single goal of honing their martial skills. Fire Warriors often grow up solely among others of their kind, and have little to compare their experiences to while young. Their childhood groups, if such a term can be applied to such a rigorously militaristic youth, often continue into service, either as officially bonded teams (La'rua) or serving within the same Hunter Cadre (Kau'ui). The Fire caste's structure is not too dissimilar to that of other species. Teams are composed of basic warriors, known as Shas'la, led by a team leader, named a Shas'ui. Particularly successful veterans are rewarded with the title of Shas've and allowed to pilot the vaunted battlesuits. Fire Warriors awarded their own command are known as Shas'el, whereas the highest level of command carries the weighty honorific of Shas'o.

While individual teams rarely shift their composition, barring losses and casualties, the idea of the Cadre is quite flexible and its make-up varies depending on the needs of the battlefield and the war at large. Teams of Fire Warriors always make up the core of a Cadre, but find support from Pathfinders, Crisis Suit teams, Kroot auxiliaries, drone teams, and a variety of vehicles such as the Hammerhead tank.

While ground vehicles typically employ Fire caste pilots, air and space superiority comes from allies in the Air caste.

STARTING SKILLS, TALENTS, TRAITS, AND GEAR

Starting Skills: Common Lore (Tau Empire), Dodge, Logic, Literacy, Speak Language (Tau), Tech-Use.

Starting Talents: Fire Caste Weapon Training, Marksman, Rapid Reload, Supporting Fire, Unshakeable Faith.

Starting Traits: Classified Competence, For The Greater Good!, Non-Imperial, Speak Not Unto the Alien.

Starting Gear: Good Craftsmanship pulse rifle or Good Craftsmanship pulse carbine, Best Craftsmanship pulse pistol, 3 Tau photon grenades, Tau combat armour with inbuilt micro-bead, translator unit, and blacksun filter.

During the endless training Fire Warriors undergo, special care is taken to note particular strengths or skills individuals exhibit. Those with signs of command often undertake the Trial by Fires, those with particular agility often find their way into Pathfinder training, while those with mechanical affinity might be earmarked as drone controllers. The Tau war machine strives to not misuse its resources, and seeks to develop its soldiers' natural talents to the fullest.

Tau war doctrine prizes mobility and tactical flexibility over all. Throughout their varied campaigns, the Tau have learned that they possess certain weaknesses in terms of combat, perhaps notably in melee fighting. They have sought to address these deficiencies in various ways, such as the addition of Kroot and Vespida auxiliaries, but their chief weapon lies in never allowing the enemy to close the distance. They achieve this either by overwhelming firepower, or rapid relocation via Devilfish or Barracuda transports. Technically, many tactical philosophies have been developed throughout the years, and innovative ones are written as the Tau encounter new races and fighting styles, but two ancient tactics in particular still influence Fire Warriors. Kauyon, or the art of the patient hunter, dictates using a single unit to lure an unsuspecting enemy into a carefully arranged trap. Such ambushes often have multiple layers, leaving the enemy reeling after every unexpected counter assault. Mont'ka, or the art of the killing blow, revolves around carefully identifying a key target before precisely assaulting it with overwhelming



FIRE WARRIOR CHARACTERISTIC ADVANCES

Characteristic	Simple	Trained	Intermediate	Expert
Weapon Skill	500	750	1000	2500
Ballistic Skill	100	250	500	750
Strength	500	750	1000	2500
Toughness	250	500	750	1000
Agility	250	500	750	1000
Intelligence	100	250	500	750
Perception	100	250	500	750
Willpower	250	500	750	1000
Fellowship	250	500	750	1000

force. In such a manner have many foes of the Greater Good suddenly found themselves beset, their leadership annihilated, and the Tau retreating even before the remaining enemy can organise a defence. Fire Warriors expect to use many strategies in warfare, always adapting to the current flow of battle, but many commanders prefer certain strategies over others and default to them whenever possible.

A Fire Warrior who has found himself amongst a Rogue Trader's party likely will be experiencing a novel sense of freedom away from the constant training and battle that is life as

a Fire Warrior. He will seek to tactically analyse a situation rather than charging headlong in, and generally prefer to engage at maximum possible range. Although trained for it, a Fire Warrior realises that combat is not always the first or even preferred option, and will happily stand aside to let the Water caste-equivalents of the party do their work. When engaged in battle, while not afraid to retreat as necessary, the Fire Warrior fights to the absolute last, gladly sacrificing himself if the situation or his commander calls for it. In such a way has the Greater Good always prospered.

RANK 1 FIRE WARRIOR ADVANCES

Advance	Cost	Type	Prerequisites
Awareness	100	Skill	
Ciphers	100	Skill	
Common Lore (War)	100	Skill	
Literacy +10	100	Skill	Literacy
Scholastic Lore (Tau Empire)	100	Skill	
Speak Language (Kroot)	100	Skill	
Speak Language (Low Gothic)	100	Skill	
Charm	200	Skill	
Command	200	Skill	
Concealment	200	Skill	
Drive (Skimmer)	200	Skill	
Logic +10	200	Skill	Logic
Medicae	200	Skill	
Navigate (Surface)	200	Skill	
Silent Move	200	Skill	
Tech-Use +10	300	Skill	Tech-Use
New Allies	300	Talent	Fel 30
Nerves of Steel	300	Talent	
Sprint	300	Talent	
Ambidextrous	500	Talent	
Melee Weapon Training (Primitive)	500	Talent	
Bonding Ritual	500	Talent	WP 35

RANK 2 FIRE WARRIOR ADVANCES

Advance	Cost	Type	Prerequisites
Common Lore (Tau Empire) +10	100	Skill	Common Lore (Tau Empire)
Literacy +20	100	Skill	Literacy +10
Scholastic Lore (Tau Empire) +10	100	Skill	Scholastic Lore (Tau Empire)
Scrutiny	100	Skill	
Swim	100	Skill	
Command +10	200	Skill	Command
Deceive	200	Skill	
Drive (Skimmer) +10	200	Skill	Drive (Skimmer)
Intimidate	200	Skill	
Inquiry	200	Skill	
Logic +20	200	Skill	Logic +10
Navigate (Stellar)	200	Skill	
Deadeye Shot	200	Talent	BS 30
Hard Target	200	Talent	Ag 40
Meditation	200	Talent	
Rapid Reaction	200	Talent	Ag 40
Sound Constitution	200	Talent	
Technological Insight	300	Talent	Scholastic Lore (Tau Empire), Tech-Use +10
Flame Weapon Training (Universal)	500	Talent	
Heavy Weapon Training (Choose One)	500	Talent	
Melee Weapon Training (Universal)	500	Talent	
Superior Supply Chain	500	Talent	

RANK 3 FIRE WARRIOR ADVANCES

Advance	Cost	Type	Prerequisites
Common Lore (War) +10	100	Skill	Common Lore (War)
Common Lore (Tau Empire) +20	100	Skill	Common Lore (Tau Empire) +10
Scholastic Lore (Tau Empire) +20	100	Skill	Scholastic Lore (Tau Empire) +10
Awareness +10	200	Skill	Awareness
Drive (Skimmers) +10	200	Skill	Drive (Skimmers)
Medicae +10	200	Skill	Medicae
Charm +10	300	Skill	Charm
Demolitions	300	Skill	
Pilot (Flyers)	300	Skill	
Survival	300	Skill	
Tracking	300	Skill	
Air of Authority	300	Talent	Fel 30
Crack Shot	300	Talent	BS 40
Double Team	300	Talent	
Foresight	300	Talent	Int 30
Fire Support	400	Talent	BS 40, Fel 35
Heavy Weapon Training (Choose One)	500	Talent	
Hip Shooting	500	Talent	BS 40, Ag 40
Infused Knowledge	500	Talent	Int 40
Master of Technology	500	Talent	Scholastic Lore (Tau Empire), Common Lore (War)
Polyglot	500	Talent	Int 30, Fel 30
Two-Weapon Wielder	500	Talent	WS 35 <i>or</i> BS 35, Ag 35

RANK 4 FIRE WARRIOR ADVANCES

Advance	Cost	Type	Prerequisites
Literacy +20	100	Skill	Literacy +10
Scrutiny +10	100	Skill	Scrutiny
Peer (Kroot or other Tau Empire race)	100	Talent	Fel 30
Command +20	200	Skill	Command +10
Deceive +10	200	Skill	Deceive
Navigate (Surface) +10	200	Skill	Navigate (Surface)
Navigate (Stellar) +10	200	Skill	Navigate (Stellar)
Pilot (Flyers) +10	200	Skill	Pilot (Flyers)
Tech-Use +20	200	Skill	Tech-Use +10
Tracking +10	200	Skill	Tracking
Blind Fighting	200	Talent	Per 30
Sound Constitution	200	Talent	
Armour of Contempt	300	Talent	WP 40
Fearless	300	Talent	
Pilot (Personal)	500	Skill	
Envoy of the Greater Good	500	Talent	Fel 45, Charm +10
Furious Fusillade	500	Talent	BS 40, Crack Shot
Guardian	500	Talent	Ag 40
Mighty Shot	500	Talent	BS 40
Tactical Flexibility	500	Talent	Sprint, Scholastic Lore (Tau Empire) +10

RANK 5 FIRE WARRIOR ADVANCES

Advance	Cost	Type	Prerequisites
Catfall	100	Talent	Ag 30
Leap Up	100	Talent	Ag 30
Charm +20	200	Skill	Charm +10
Concealment +10	200	Skill	Concealment
Silent Move +20	200	Skill	Silent Move +10
Survival +10	200	Skill	Survival
Swim +10	200	Skill	Swim
Demolition +10	300	Skill	Demolition
Dodge +20	300	Skill	Dodge +10
Intimidate +10	300	Skill	Intimidate
Medicae +20	300	Skill	Medicae +10
Pilot (Flyers) +20	300	Skill	Pilot (Flyers) +10
Shadowing	300	Skill	
Die Hard	300	Talent	
Rapid Reaction	300	Talent	Ag 40
Sharpshooter	300	Talent	BS 40, Deadeye Shot
Technical Knock	400	Talent	Int 30
Disciple of Kauyon	500	Talent	Bonding Ritual
Dual Shot	500	Talent	Ag 40, Two-Weapon Wielder
Exemplar of the Selfless Cause	500	Talent	Bonding Ritual, Command +10
Exotic Weapons Training (Choose One)	500	Talent	
Talented (Drive)	500	Talent	
Takedown	750	Talent	

RANK 6 FIRE WARRIOR ADVANCES

Advance	Cost	Type	Prerequisites
Climb	100	Skill	
Common Lore (War) +20	100	Skill	Common Lore (War) +10
Awareness +20	200	Skill	Awareness +10
Interrogation	200	Skill	
Navigation (Surface) +20	200	Skill	Navigation (Surface) +10
Security	300	Skill	
Speak Language (High Gothic)	200	Skill	
Hatred (Orks)	200	Talent	
Light Sleeper	200	Talent	Per 30
Deceive +20	300	Skill	Deceive +10
Scrutiny +20	300	Skill	Scrutiny +10
Bulging Biceps	300	Talent	S 45
Cleanse and Purify	300	Talent	Flame Weapon Training (Universal)
Sure Strike	400	Talent	WS 30
Blessing of the Ethereals	500	Talent	WP 40
Exotic Weapons Training (Choose One)	500	Talent	
Good Reputation (Kroot or other Tau Empire race)	500	Talent	Fel 50, Peer
Inspire Wrath	500	Talent	Fel 30
Jaded	500	Talent	WP 30
Strength through Unity	600	Talent	Fel 40, Bonding Ritual
Duty Unto Death	750	Talent	WP 45
Unarmed Warrior	750	Talent	WS 35, Ag 35

RANK 7 FIRE WARRIOR ADVANCES

Advance	Cost	Type	Prerequisites
Climb +10	200	Skill	Climb
Survival +20	200	Skill	Survival +10
Swim +20	200	Skill	Swim +10
Tracking +20	200	Skill	Tracking +10
Interrogation +10	300	Skill	Interrogation
Intimidate +20	300	Skill	Intimidate +10
Security +10	300	Skill	Security
Shadowing +10	300	Skill	Shadowing
Gunslinger	300	Talent	BS 40, Two-Weapon Wielder
Iron Discipline	300	Talent	WP 30, Command
Total Recall	300	Talent	Int 30
Concealment +20	500	Skill	Concealment +10
Demolition +20	500	Skill	Demolition +10
Exotic Weapons Training (Choose One)	500	Talent	
Hotshot Pilot	500	Talent	Ag 40, Pilot (Any One)
Independent Targeting	500	Talent	BS 40
Master Orator	500	Talent	Fel 30
Precise Blow	500	Talent	WS 40, Sure Strike
Step Aside	500	Talent	Ag 40, Dodge
Talented (Command)	500	Talent	
Disciple of Mont'ka	750	Talent	Ag 40, Silent Move +10
Technology Triumphant	1000	Talent	Scholastic Lore (Tau Empire) +10, Tech-Use +20,

RANK 8 FIRE WARRIOR ADVANCES

Advance	Cost	Type	Prerequisites
Climb +20	200	Skill	Climb +10
Interrogation +20	300	Skill	Interrogation +10
Security +20	300	Skill	Security +10
Shadowing +20	300	Skill	Shadowing +10
Swift Attack	400	Talent	WS 35
Exotic Weapons Training (Choose One) x2	500	Talent	
Into the Jaws of Hell	500	Talent	Iron Discipline
Master & Commander	500	Talent	Int 35, Fel 35
Master Surgeon	500	Talent	Medicae +10
Sound Constitution	500	Talent	
Talented (Any One)	500	Talent	
Wall of Steel	500	Talent	WS 40, Parry
Greater than the Sum	750	Talent	Fel 45 , New Allies
Last Man Standing	750	Talent	Nerves of Steel
Through Unity, Devastation	1000	Talent	BS 45, Furious Fusillade, Command +20



ALTERNATE CAREER RANKS

"The Greater Good, you say? Greater for who, exactly?"

—Rogue Trader Kalos Norne

Alternate Career Ranks represent diversions and differing branches to a character's basic Career Path. These might be the result of exposure to new cultures or agencies in the Expanse, hidden secrets a character chooses to reveal to his fellow Explorers, or the result of specialised training or equipment a character has gained in his travels. Note that these Alternate Career Ranks do not fundamentally change a character's nature; if a character is following the Arch-militant Career Path, then his path stays focused on martial abilities and conflict. Rather, they signify a character's experiences moving along a side path, learning new abilities and gaining new experiences along the way.

Alternate Career Ranks can let a player differentiate and personalise his character, especially in situations where several players have chosen the same Career. Based on the new directions a player wishes his Explorer to follow, he might find his character evolving in ways the player had not initially anticipated when creating him.

Alternate Career Ranks also allow a character to become even more firmly rooted into the settings of **ROGUE TRADER**, the Calixis Sector and the Koronus Expanse. Each of these paths offer Explorers new and exciting ways to interact with the rest of their surroundings.

TAKING AN ALTERNATE CAREER RANK

Alternate Career Ranks might look very appealing, and not just because they represent something that diverges from the standard Career Path. With access to new powers, Skills, and Talents, a character can stand out from others and, ideally, better aid his fellow Explorers. However, some Alternate Career Ranks can complicate the campaign at large, and players should always ask for the GM's permission before having their Explorers take on Alternate Career Ranks.

Each Alternate Career Rank has several Prerequisites that an Explorer must meet before selecting it. Many of these Prerequisites are Talents, Skills, or Characteristic thresholds, and an Explorer must fulfil all of the listed Prerequisites for an Alternate Career Rank before selecting it.

In addition, some Alternate Career Ranks are only available to Explorers from certain Careers—the Drone Controller Alternate Career Rank is available only to Rogue Traders, Explorators, Missionaries, Seneschals, and Void-Masters. Other Alternate Career Ranks have various restrictions in this regard; the Battlesuit Pilot Alternate Career Rank is not available to any Explorer who is a psyker (such as an Astropath Transcendent), but any other Explorer

can select it provided that he meets the other Prerequisites. Lastly, each Alternate Career Rank has a set of Ranks at which it can be selected. Typically, this is a minimum Rank within a Career Path that the Alternate Career Rank can replace (such as Rank 3 or higher).

If an Explorer meets all the above requirements for an Alternate Career Rank, he can select it in place of one of his normal Career Path's Ranks when he earns enough xp to access that Rank. The Explorer replaces the Rank he would have taken with the Alternate Career Rank. The Explorer exchanges the Alternate Career Rank's Advance Table for the usual Rank he would be able to make purchases from as part of his Career. At this point, the Explorer has access to the new Advances and may spend xp to purchase these Talents, Traits, and Skills. Some of the Alternate Career Ranks also have special Traits or other abilities that the Explorer gains immediately upon selecting the Alternate Career Rank. Once the Explorer has earned enough xp points to reach the next Rank in his Career, he returns to the next Rank in his original Career Path.

While any new Alternate Career Rank is filled with new opportunities, there are some drawbacks to diverging off of the standard path. This new focus might deny an Explorer access to other Skills and Talents, or force the Explorer to pay more experience for them. A player could even find his character's maximum ability with certain Skills reaching its upper limit earlier than he had planned. This is a potential price for taking a more generalised character in a more specific and specialised direction.



As all of this can complicate the normal character progression system, Alternate Career Ranks are recommended for more experienced players. Keep in mind also that regardless of how many new options an Explorer gains, an Explorer's Rank is still governed by the total amount of xp he has earned over the course of his development.

ELITE ADVANCES FROM MISSED CAREER RANKS

Choosing an Alternate Career Rank means a character has diverged from the generalised regular path of his career for a more specialised one. While this means access to new and often unique abilities during his tenure, it can often mean missing out on the opportunities afforded in the regular development of his character. The Explorer can purchase these "missed" Skills and Talents with the GM's approval as Elite Advances in the missed Rank at a cost set by the Game Master. A recommended base cost for these Advances is twice the original cost (so a 200 xp Skill would cost 400 xp, while a 500 xp Talent would cost an impressive 1,000 xp). The GM can modify this amount up or down as he sees fit, keeping in mind that Alternate Career Ranks present opportunities to characters they normally would not have, and there should be a trade-off for this opportunity.

EXAMPLE

Tau Fire Warrior Bah'tho has a great affinity for the sophisticated control and targetting systems of the XV88 Broadside Battlesuits. He has all of the necessary Prerequisites and at Rank 3 switches to the Battlesuit Pilot Advance Table. He is still a Fire Warrior, but as well as committing acts of martial prowess and commanding other warriors, he now has a focus on utilising the advanced armour functions and devastating weapons systems of Tau Battlesuits to great effect on the battlefield. Bah'tho now has access to the Skills and Talents listed under the Battlesuit Pilot Advances at the costs listed there, and may spend xp on them freely from this point forward. He has missed out on the standard Fire Warrior Rank 3 list, but will later proceed to Rank 4 normally, and can purchase options from Rank 3 as Elite Advances with the GM's permission.



CAREER PROGRESSION

Advancing to a character's next Rank is done normally once the character has accumulated and spent enough xp. The character might find in later Ranks that the digression he took for his Alternate Career Rank has left him bereft of certain Skills, ones needed as Prerequisites for some of the Advances the character might wish to have. To acquire them the player must obtain them as Elite Advances. Alternately, the player might find developing the new Advances his character gained in his Alternate Career Rank is a way to further individualise a character and make up for the missed opportunities of the path not taken.

EXAMPLE

After a particularly hard-won battle against the Rak'Gol, Bah'tho the Battlesuit Pilot has realised his calling as a battlefield commander. As such, he wishes to purchase the Air of Authority Talent that would have been available from Fire Warrior Rank 3. To this end, his GM allows him to take the Advance, but only as long as Bah'tho spends time pursuing such a role among the armymen of his home vessel. He must then pay 600 xp to purchase the Talent instead of 300 xp, twice the base cost, as recommended under the rules for purchasing Elite Advances.

PATHFINDER

"I am the tip of the Spear."

—Pathfinder Shas'ui Moh're

Though the Tau Empire relies on technology for many battlefield tasks, including surveillance and reconnaissance, there are some tasks that even the most advanced drones and sophisticated sensors cannot be trusted to handle alone. To this end, the Fire Caste employs Pathfinders, who act as its eyes on the fields of battle. These warrior-scouts stalk ahead of the main force, acting covertly even before battle is joined to ensure the ultimate victory of the Tau Empire. Typically armoured in light reconnaissance armour, Pathfinders reconnoitre behind enemy lines, using their marker lights to illuminate high-value targets for heavier ordnance or eliminating sentries with deadly precision weaponry.

Members of the Fire caste chosen for this advance battlefield role are usually adept at the art of stealth, able to use the environment to their advantage and move between enemy patrols without attracting attention. This can be to gather intelligence, or to place and activate homing beacons, positional relays, or other equipment that helps their force to gain a crucial edge when the battle begins in earnest. Once the shots begin to fly, Pathfinders are frequently tasked with suppressing or identifying specific enemy forces for obliteration by Crisis Teams or BroadSides, or eliminating infantry targets with their pulse carbines. Some Pathfinders are entrusted with the newly developed ion rifle instead, a deadly but unstable weapon that gives Pathfinder teams the ability to bring down heavier foes, including armoured infantry and light vehicles. Though operating this weapon can be extremely dangerous, it is a risk most Pathfinders are happy to take in the name of the Greater Good. Such is the way of the guiding philosophy of the Tau Empire, and thus the way of its Pathfinders.

Often, Pathfinders are used as the bait in the Tau philosophy of war, drawing the enemies of the Tau Empire out of position so that others can strike them down. This dangerous role epitomises the philosophy of the Greater Good, risking one life to safeguard many lives. Pathfinder teams have notoriously high attrition rates, for should they be discovered infiltrating into enemy territory, they are usually cut off from the bulk of their cadre. Their light arms and armour, though ideal for their stealth role, offer them far less protection than the combat armour and heavier weapons of a group of Fire

Warriors. Deep behind enemy lines, Pathfinders can expect little direct support from the rest of their cadre, and any error can be fatal for the entire group. A team's coordination must be perfect, and the skills of each member sharp. As such, many Pathfinders are selfless almost to a fault, gladly willing to lay down their lives so that their comrades can step over their fallen corpses to victory.

While many Pathfinders sacrifice themselves to further the Greater Good, some survive their duties and rise to prominence, moving up the chain of command to more illustrious positions. There are those who seek the glory of command, rising to wield mighty battlesuits and lead massive strike forces to grand victories. Others, however, believe that they can do the most good from behind the scenes, quietly supporting their brethren and guaranteeing that others can destroy their foes. The famous El'Myamoto, also called Sub-Commander Darkstrider, has never sought promotion beyond the role of Pathfinder. Instead, he



PATHFINDER ADVANCES

Advance	Cost	Type	Prerequisites
Awareness +10	100	Skill	Awareness
Concealment	100	Skill	
Silent Move +10	100	Skill	Silent Move
Sleight of Hand	100	Skill	
Tracking	100	Skill	
Concealment +10	200	Skill	Concealment
Dodge +10	200	Skill	Dodge
Navigate (Surface) +10	200	Skill	Navigate (Surface)
Tracking +10	200	Skill	Tracking
Combat Sense	200	Talent	Per 40
Paranoia	200	Talent	
Unremarkable	200	Talent	
Demolitions	300	Skill	
Navigate (Surface) +20	300	Skill	Navigate (Surface) +10
Security	300	Skill	
Shadowing	300	Skill	
Deadeye Shot	300	Talent	BS 30
Guided Precision	300	Talent	BS 40, Deadeye Shot
Hard Target	300	Talent	Ag 40
Demolition +10	400	Skill	Demolition
Silent Move +20	400	Skill	Silent Move +10
Hip Shooting	500	Talent	BS 40, Ag 40
Last Man Standing	500	Talent	Nerves of Steel
Talented (Silent Move)	500	Talent	
Opportunist's Evasion	600	Talent	Ag 45, Hard Target

has continued to hone his skills as a stealth specialist, contributing to victory after victory for the Tau Empire from the shadows. Such individuals who do not pursue the greater honour of a more visible role are extremely rare, but their impact on the outcome of a battle can be as significant as that of even a prominent leader—and working in perfect tandem with a skilled commander, both warriors can achieve far grander successes than either could ever hope to win alone.

Required Careers: Tau Fire Warrior

Alternate Rank: Rank 2 or higher (7,000 xp)

Requirements: Ag 35, Nerves of Steel, Silent Move

Other Requirements: A member of the Fire caste must prove himself capable at the art of stealth before even being accepted to undertake the training to become a Pathfinder, for the Fire caste has no shortage of recruits seeking to take on this dangerous battlefield role. After demonstrating the aptitude—and the mettle—to serve in this role, an Explorer must have the opportunity to undergo the training given to a Pathfinder.

NEW TALENT: GUIDED PRECISION

Prerequisites: Ballistic Skill 40, Deadeye Shot

Whenever this Explorer hits a target with a markerlight (see page 25), other characters who attack his Marked target gain an additional +10 bonus to hit and ignore a number of APs of Cover up to the Explorer's Perception Bonus.

NEW TALENT: OPPORTUNIST'S EVASION

Prerequisites: Agility 45, Hard Target

Pathfinders are skilled at creating openings for their allies to exploit, both strategically and in personal combat. To manoeuvre a target into the optimal position for his allies to strike it down, a Pathfinder must often put himself in harm's way, risking his life to expose a weakness in his enemy's defences.

Whenever this Explorer succeeds on a Dodge or Parry Test to avoid an attack made by an enemy within 20 metres, his allies gain a +20 bonus to Weapon Skill and Ballistic Skill Tests made against that foe until the beginning of this Explorer's next Turn.

DRONE HANDLER

"I guide the Empire's fury."

—Tahm'eo, Firesight Marksman

The Tau way of war hinges upon using technology to its utmost, and it is the many sophisticated machines the Tau Empire wields that have allowed it to spread across the stars so rapidly. Drones are automated combat support units and are an integral part of the Tau Empire's strategy for conquest. These combat automatons house artificial intelligences capable of independent initiative and problem solving. However, despite the undeniable effectiveness of drones acting alone on the battlefield, a Fire caste warrior skilled in directing them can make drones much, much deadlier. In addition to improving their accuracy, a warrior guiding drones can ensure that they fight both tactically and strategically, making critical judgements on which targets are truly the most important and when to hold steadfast or make tactical retreats.

Some members of the Fire caste with a particular aptitude for technology are assigned to closely manage drones, as a firesight marksman directing a team of sniper drones or as a Shas'ui equipped with a drone controller system. Though drones possess sufficiently complex artificial intelligences to act upon their own initiative, they are designed to be most effective when working in concert with a skilled Fire caste operator. Under the control of such a warrior, drones become incredibly formidable, ripping apart their foes with tightly-placed bursts of fire or moving in perfect tandem with the rest of the squad. When fighting alongside a squad of Fire Warriors or Pathfinders, drones act in a supporting role, augmenting the squad's firepower or performing specialised tasks that a Tau warrior could not undertake alone. A warrior controlling drones often continues to fight even as he guides his mechanical aides, giving the drones just enough guidance to maximise their automated lethality while placing careful shots of his own.

Battlesuit pilots also sometimes use drones for support, controlling the roving machines from within their armoured suits and using gun drones to bolster their already considerable firepower. Others are assigned shield drones, which project powerful energy fields that protect the pilot from the worst oncoming fire. Thanks to their anti-gravitic motors and jet-thrusters, drones can easily match the pace of a warrior wearing a battlesuit. This impressive mobility makes drones ideal support units for fast-moving XV8 Crisis Teams and XV9 Hazard Teams. Some Tau pilots have even been known to take command of entire squads of drones, leading droves of the flitting, saucer-shaped machines personally from within their battlesuits.

In addition to the most common types of drone seen on the battlefield, the Earth caste has crafted numerous experimental offshoots, from the command-link drone that accompanies Commander Shadowsun to the terrain-altering grav-inhibitor

drone used by some Pathfinder teams. These purpose-built drones allow the Tau Empire to explore new configurations and technologies, and the Earth caste's innovative engineers are constantly developing new prototypes to test in the furnace of war. The warriors tasked with managing these and other drones are a critical part of the Tau doctrine of war, and must learn to direct their AI charges with the utmost precision.

Required Careers: Tau Fire Warrior

Alternate Rank: Rank 3 or higher (10,000 xp)

Requirements: Int 40, Tech-Use +10

Other Requirements: To become a Drone Handler, a member of the Fire caste must display an aptitude for technology and undergo the proper training to guide and coordinate the actions of one or more drones on the battlefield.



DRONE HANDLER ADVANCES

Advance	Cost	Type	Prerequisites
Awareness +10	100	Skill	Awareness
Blather	100	Skill	
Common Lore (Tech)	100	Skill	
Scholastic Lore (Chymistry)	100	Skill	
Trade (Armourer)	100	Skill	
Trade (Chymist)	100	Skill	
Trade (Technomat)	100	Skill	
Common Lore (Tech) +10	200	Skill	Common Lore (Tech)
Evaluate	200	Skill	
Forbidden Lore (Xenos)	200	Skill	
Technical Knock	200	Talent	Int 30
Common Lore (Tech) +20	300	Skill	Common Lore (Tech) +10
Tech-Use +20	300	Skill	Tech-Use +10
Master of Technology	300	Talent	Scholastic Lore (Tau Empire), Common Lore (War)
Priority Fire	300	Talent	Per 35, Quick Draw
Quick Draw	300	Talent	
Combat Formation	400	Talent	Int 40
Pistol Weapon Training (Universal)	400	Talent	
Gun Blessing	500	Talent	† See below
Talented (Tech-Use)	500	Talent	
Swarm Protocols	800	Talent	Int 45, Trade (Technomat)

† Tau Gun Drone Handlers ignore the usual Mechanicus Implants Trait Prerequisite for the Gun Blessing Talent.

NEW TALENT: PRIORITY FIRE

Prerequisites: Perception 35, Quick Draw

One of the most foundational skills of any military commander is the elimination of the enemy in the most efficient and effective manner possible. Maintaining disciplined target priority allows a force to multiply its effective strength and minimise the power its enemies can project against it.

Once per Round, as a Half Action or Reaction, this Explorer may have one Drone under his control immediately make an Attack Action against any foe within range as a Free Action.

NEW TALENT: SWARM PROTOCOLS

Prerequisites: Intelligence 45, Trade (Technomat)

A truly skilful Drone Controller can direct his charges with such finesse and keen perception that they appear to act on their own, reacting to their own battlefield conditions and circumstances, yet with a unity of purpose that transcends squads of even the most seasoned veterans.

Whenever this Explorer takes an Action that gives directions to one or more of his drones, he may have it affect a number of drones up to his Intelligence Bonus instead.

++Incoming Transmission++

++Priority Code Omicron++

++Reception Stamp 8329811M41++

Notes of Tech-Priest Felor Kev on the Strange Creations of Xenos

These Tau have taken a strange alphanumeric cipher for cataloguing their armoured weapons, and this scheme includes everything from their inferior attempts to replicate power armour to their fragile behemoths the size of a Sentinel walker. Strangely, they seem to care little for the forge from which the machine was born, instead focusing only on the pattern it follows.

The first letters designate the broad series to which the armour belongs—the so-called “XV-series” is the most common, and thus perhaps the most-widespread pattern amidst their forges, though this is utter conjecture on my part. The next number is an abstract scalar reflection of the size of the armour, with a designation of 2 representing armour roughly the size of a suit of power armour and a 9 standing roughly the size of a Sentinel. When asked if there are entries larger than this, their technicians become extremely taciturn. I am certain that their inferior grasp of the workings of machine spirits prevent them from building anything that could compete in size and strength of the Imperium’s mighty Titans, a fact I am sure they find duly distressing.

The secondary numerical designation, such as the “5” within the XV15 and XV25 Stealth Suits reflects the specific functionality of the machine. When I inquired with their forge-masters as to what each of these means, they explained that the “5” means that it is a stealth variant.

Finally, some suits of armour seem to possess a tertiary numerical designation, reflecting that the machine is a particularly purpose-driven variant of a common pattern. For instance, the XV8-05 “Enforcer” Crisis Suit piloted by Sub-Commander Nightfire is larger than the standard XV8, likely to denote the Sub-Commander’s rank and status.

Incomprehensibly, they show a strong preference toward more recently produced armour. Even stranger, their poor equivalent to Engineers speak often of future “innovations” to “improve” upon the existing templates rather than properly venerating the ancient machines that served them in aeons past. I cannot see how such foolish actions could lead to anything less than the total and utter ruin of their species, but it is not my place to question the Lord-Captain’s choice of allies...



BATTLESUIT PILOT

"Long ago, when I was a Shas'la, I fought at the Scouring of Nomolos. My squad was pinned, and our numbers badly diminished. It seemed as though the time of our final sacrifice had come, and we stood before the horde of gue'la, ready for our end. Defeat was certain, and we intended to die well for the Greater Good. But then, I looked up and saw the Commander, blazing by like a crimson meteor, his weapons alight. He plunged into the enemy ranks, one warrior against an army, and yet he fought with the utmost certainty of his victory. A cheer went up through the ranks, and it became a roar as we surged forward for the glory of the Fire caste and the Tau Empire."

—Sub-Commander Starspear, on the Seonn Expedition

The greatest heroes of the Fire caste are those who stride to war in mighty, armoured battlesuits.

The pride of the Fire caste rests upon its pilots, for battlesuits are among the most important symbols of the Tau Empire. In these machines, members of the Fire caste can watch ingenuity triumph over savagery and ambition vanquish complacency. A battlesuit pilot ensconced in a one of these machines can weather some of the harshest conditions the elements can muster, glide through the void, and annihilate foes he could never hope to vanquish otherwise.

Battlesuits range considerably in size and power, and different pilots configure their weapons platforms in radically different ways. While the XV8 Crisis battlesuit is the most widely used battlesuit, there are many different variants in use across the Tau Empire, and thus individual battlesuit pilots often have their own machines retrofitted or modified to the exact needs of their cadre. Some pilots are best suited to agile XV25 Stealth Suits, while others have a greater aptitude for the operation of XV88 Broadside Battlesuits based on the incredible firepower these lumbering machines can bring to bear. Battlesuit pilots are typically assigned to the sort of battlesuit with which

they can best serve the Greater Good, and then modifications are made to the base chassis to help them perform their tasks. As a pilot grows in prestige and honour, however, he is often granted more advanced wargear to help him achieve even more incredible deeds in the name of the Greater Good. Should a battlesuit pilot be assigned to his Commander's saz'nami, or bodyguard complement, he is likely a veteran of many battles, extremely experienced in the way of mobile warfare, and equipped with a set of wargear perfectly suited to support his preferred style of combat.

The greatest commanders and warriors are assigned experimental weaponry or even entirely unique battlesuits. Such prototypes have turned the tide of many battles where the Tau Empire might have suffered grievous defeats without their pilots' intervention. Innovations such as Commander Shadowsun's XV22 Battlesuit, O'Vesa's customised XV104 Riptide piloting arrays, and the twelve mighty Onager gauntlets are all potent technological developments by the Earth caste entrusted to the champions of



BATTLESUIT PILOT ADVANCES

Advance	Cost	Type	Prerequisites
Pilot (Personal)	100	Skill	
Pilot (Personal) +10	200	Skill	Pilot (Personal)
Guardian	200	Talent	Ag 40
Pilot (Personal) +20	300	Skill	Pilot (Personal) +10
Advanced Battlesuit Training	300	Talent	Ag 40, Pilot (Personal) +10
Cleanse and Purify	300	Talent	Flame Weapon Training (Universal)
Dual Shot	300	Talent	Ag 40, Two-Weapon Wielder
Independent Targeting	300	Talent	BS 40
Orthoproxy	300	Talent	
Catfall	400	Talent	Ag 30
Furious Assault	400	Talent	WS 35
Rapid Reaction	500	Talent	Ag 40
Technical Knock	500	Talent	Int 30
Talented (Pilot)	500	Talent	
Hotshot Pilot	750	Talent	Ag 40, Pilot (Any)
Step Aside	750	Talent	Ag 40, Dodge
Exemplar of the Selfless Cause	800	Talent	Bonding Ritual, Command +10
Disciple of Kauyon	800	Talent	Bonding Ritual
Veteran's Reflexes	1000	Talent	Ag 45, Talented (Pilot)

the Fire caste. In the hands of their esteemed wielders, this equipment has become the stuff of legends within the Tau Empire, for the tools and weapons heroes use to accomplish their greatest deeds are ever tied to their stories. Still, the words of Commander Puretide ring across the centuries: "The mind that directs the sword is more dangerous than the blade." No matter how deadly his wargear, it is the pilot whose skill must bring it to bear.

Required Careers: Tau Fire Warrior

Alternate Rank: Rank 5 or higher (17,000 xp)

Requirements: Ag 45

Other Requirements: A member of the Fire caste must have earned the rank of Shas'ui, proving himself worthy of the honour of wearing a mighty battlesuit. Once he does so, he must undergo the considerable training associated with piloting a battlesuit before being assigned to use one on the battlefield.



NEW TALENT: ADVANCED BATTLESUIT TRAINING

Prerequisites: Agility 40, Pilot (Personal) +10

To a skilled pilot, a battlesuit is like a second skin, providing its wearer with incredible offensive capability and stout protection with little to no sacrifice in mobility and dexterity.

This Explorer no longer grants a bonus to enemies attempting to hit him with attacks based on the Size Trait of any battlesuit he pilots.

NEW TALENT: VETERAN'S REFLEXES

Prerequisites: Agility 45, Talented (Pilot)

The greatest Tau battlesuit pilots can use their battlesuits in ways few others can even imagine. Their control of the suit's motive systems is so precise and their reflexes so sharp that while piloting the massive armour they can actually transcend the limitations of their flesh-and-blood bodies, reacting to the whirling chaos of battle with a grace that they could never achieve outside their battlesuit.

This Explorer may use his Pilot (Personal) Skill in place of his Acrobatics, Dodge, and Parry Skills for any Test he is called upon to make while piloting a battlesuit.

TAU ARMOURY

"Strive always to place yourself where your enemy cannot attack and to attack where your enemy cannot defend."

—The Tau Doctrine of War

The Tau are an extremely advanced technological species. Many of their weapon and equipment designs far exceed those of the Imperium or a great many other species in the galaxy. Many Explorers and Rogue Traders eagerly pursue any and all clues pertaining to their existence in the Koronus Expanse. Given the distance between the Expanse and the Tau Empire, these occurrences are exceedingly rare.

TAU EQUIPMENT

On occasion, fragments of Tau technology do appear for sale or trade, often as part of a larger haul or disparate items gathered from innumerable sources. What follows is a selection of some of the more commonly encountered items and weapons, along with specific equipment only found upon those Tau Explorers brave enough to traverse the Expanse.

BLACKSUN FILTER

A blacksun filter comprises several unique sensors and lenses, similar in function to the photo visor of the Imperium. These filters are often built into helmets, or the complex sensor suites of Tau battlesuits. Some Tau Pathfinders have been seen to wear the filters independently, often taking the form of elaborate goggles or visors. The blacksun filter boosts ambient light and makes certain frequencies of light visible to the wearer, granting some limited night vision. The filters were also designed to temporarily block out extremely bright lights, preventing Tau Fire Warriors from being blinded by their own photon grenades.

A character wearing a blacksun filter gains the Dark Sight Trait and is immune to the effects of photon flash grenades, Tau photon grenades, and similar devices and abilities.

DRONE CONTROLLER

The Tau make extensive use of drone technology in many aspects of their life, and often the rudimentary artificial intelligence programs controlling these drones is enough to achieve their aims. However, in many complex situations—particularly in battle—a more direct method of control is required.

To activate a drone controller, a character must make a **Challenging (+0) Tech-Use Test**, which requires Two Full Actions. Once activated, the drone controller remains calibrated to the user until he stops using it; if given to another user, however, the new user must recalibrate the device.

AVAILABILITY

Tau weaponry, wargear, and other accoutrements are extremely difficult to come by in the Koronus Expanse. Though Cold Traders shuffle some number of xenos artefacts to the Calixis Sector from the far-away Jericho Reach and other regions where the Tau Empire has extended its influence, but generally speaking, a Rogue Trader in the Koronus Expanse would have to pay a premium to acquire such items. The Availabilities listed throughout this section reflect the assumption that the Explorers do not have access to traders with a steady supply of Tau equipment, to say nothing of representatives of the Tau Empire. If the Explorers have access to a full Tau settlement or substantial military force, they receive a +20 bonus to all Acquisition Tests to acquire this equipment. Due to its limited size and the fact that it is operating far from its supply lines, Shas'o Ja'vra's hunter cadre (in the adventure **TWILIGHT CRUSADE**) provides only a +10 bonus to such Tests.

A character with a drone controller is typically also assigned one or more drones (see page 27), which must remain within 50 metres of the drone controller to stay properly attuned to its signals. These drones follow the character with the controller and obey simple orders (such as using the Move Action to keep up with him, shielding him from harm with the Guardian Talent, and making Attack Actions against targets he designates). Rather than having their own Initiative, drones act immediately after their controller's Turn in Structured Time.

Once per Round, as a Half Action or Reaction, a character with a drone controller may make a **Routine (+20) Tech-Use Test** to assume personal control over one drone. Until the end of the Round, that drone uses its handler's Ballistic Skill instead of its own.

GRAVITY WAVE PROJECTOR

Constructed to assist in repelling enemy assault troops, the gravity wave projector emits a powerful burst of high-powered gravitons. The effects of this wave striking a living being are quite profound. Many of those affected are severely disoriented by the wave, experiencing vertigo and nausea. Others may be physically hurled to the ground, their bodies unable to cope with the sudden and unpredictable shift in gravity.

Once per Round, as a Half Action, a character equipped with a gravity wave projector may make a **Challenging (+0) Tech-Use Test** to activate the device. If he succeeds, all targets in the projector's 90 degree firing arc and within 20 metres must take a **Hard (-20) Strength Test**. If a character fails the Test, his Agility Bonus is reduced by 1d5 for the purposes of movement until the end of his next Turn; if he fails with three or more Degrees of Failure, he is knocked Prone.

TABLE 1-2: TAU ARMOUR

Name	Locations Covered	AP	Weight	Availability
Combat Armour	All	6	12kg	Near Unique
Recon Armour	All	4	3kg	Near Unique

KROOT SNIPER ROUNDS

Some Kroot Carnivores working within the Tau military have taken to using these highly specialised sniper rounds in their rifles. Designed for increased accuracy and stopping power, they have proven extremely popular with the Kroot fighting style of disruption and disorganisation.

A Kroot rifle loaded with sniper rounds changes its Rate of Fire to S/-/-, increases its Damage to 1d10+7 E, increases its Penetration to 5, decreases its Clip Size to 1, and gains the Accurate Quality.

MARKERLIGHT

One of the reasons that Tau firepower is so feared is this piece of equipment. Resembling a large, thin gunsight, the markerlight is a revolutionary weapon in the fight for the Greater Good. The markerlight projects a beam of light, invisible to the naked eye. This beam is capable of highlighting key strategic targets and relaying their position back to the shooter, his allies, and any other warrior equipped to perceive it. Use of the markerlight is a keystone of the Tau doctrine of war, allowing a skilled user to focus attacks on a single target, deny cover to the enemy, direct supporting fire, and pick out enemy officers and other high value targets.

As a Full Action, an Explorer with a markerlight may make a **Routine (+20) Ballistic Skill Test** to illuminate his target. If he succeeds on the Test, the target is now Marked until the beginning of the Explorer's next Turn. Any character who makes a Ranged Attack against the Marked target count as benefitting from a Full Action Aim Action.

PULSE ACCELERATOR

This device can be attached to any standard Pulse weapon (carbine, pistol, or rifle). It creates a powerful induction field accelerating the pulse charge to extremely high levels. The end result of this is increased range on an already long-ranged weapon.

A pulse weapon equipped with a pulse accelerator increases its Range by half.

TABLE 1-3: TAU EQUIPMENT

Name	Weight	Availability
Blacksun Filter	0.5kg	Very Rare
Drone Controller	0.5kg	Very Rare
Gravity Wave Projector	4kg	Near Unique
Kroot Sniper Rounds	0.1kg	Extremely Rare
Markerlight	0.5kg	Extremely Rare
Pulse Accelerator	0.5kg	Near Unique
Positional Relay	4.5kg	Near Unique
Target Lock	0.5kg	Extremely Rare

POSITIONAL RELAY

The Tau use these bulky devices to transmit sensitive information to and from warzones. Using a heavily encrypted tight burst radio signal, an operator can relay vital intelligence to reserve forces from deep within a fire zone or other hot spot. The encryption protocols and narrow signal combine to make listening in or tapping the radio signals very difficult.

The positional relay acts as a long-range vox, allowing Explorers equipped with them to communicate by voice at a distance of up to 10km. Due to the complex nature and security of the relay, any attempt to subvert the signal or use a vox thief to listen in suffers a -30 penalty.

TARGET LOCK

This device is designed to allow Tau Fire Warriors and battlesuit pilots to rapidly shift their attention from one target to the next. The target lock provides the user with accurate firing plans and tracks the location of individual targets, allowing for complex patterns of fire to be established by a single gunner. Originally found only on platforms mounting multiple weapons, it quickly made its way into use by Fire Warrior Shas'ui.

An Explorer with a Target Lock does not lose the benefit of an Aim Action when he makes a Reaction.

TAU ARMOUR

In addition to their advanced battlesuits, the Tau employ more traditional armour.

TAU COMBAT ARMOUR

The Fire caste uses body armour of a similar design and construction to that of carapace armour. It consists of impact resistant synthetic plates, layered over a loose-fitting but durable bodysuit. Sensors in the helmet allow for simple upgrades to be fitted like blacksun filters or target locks, and the vision slots are pre-configured to see markerlights.

TAU RECON ARMOUR

Recon armour is a lighter version of the combat armour. The reduced weight diminishes the protection it provides, but the increased mobility it allows has proven popular with Tau Pathfinder teams. A comprehensive sensor suite mounted in the helmet allows for similar upgrades to the combat armour, and each helmet is fitted with a micro-bead.

A character wearing Tau recon armour gains a +10 bonus to Concealment and Silent Move Tests.

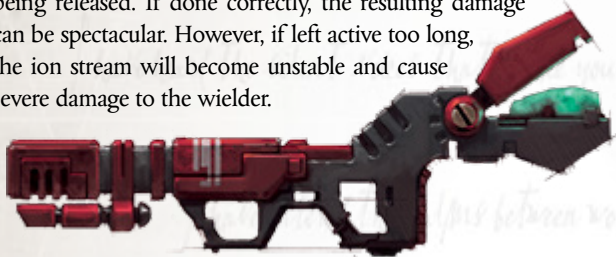
TAU WEAPONS

In the field of weapons research and construction, the Tau are extremely advanced, making good use of stable plasma generation and containment technology, as well as magnetic induction coils to propel solid slug munitions at supersonic speeds.

ION RIFLE

Tau ion weapons are typically found on heavy vehicles and void craft, and this lightweight man-portable variant is still considered highly experimental. The weapon operates by creating a stream of highly ionised particles and using advanced electro-magnetic fields to direct them at a target. Where the particles strike the target they react explosively, causing massive trauma.

Currently, the ion rifle is carried by Pathfinder teams as a variant sniper weapon. In an identical fashion to the cyclic ion blaster, the ion rifle's safety measures can be temporarily shut off, allowing the ion stream to reach dangerous levels of energy before being released. If done correctly, the resulting damage can be spectacular. However, if left active too long, the ion stream will become unstable and cause severe damage to the wielder.



KROOT HUNTING RIFLE

Tau innovation is not limited to weaponry they, themselves invented. Recently the mercenary Kroot forces, long associated with the Tau Empire, have begun fielding rifles modified by their Tau allies. The Kroot hunting rifle employs modified ammunition and an improved firing mechanism, resulting in increased range and drastic reduction in noise when fired. Kroot forces using these weapons have employed them as sniper rifles, wielding them to eliminate key enemy personnel before launching a devastating assault.



PULSE WEAPONS

Pulse weapons are a marvel of Tau technology and the standard arms of the Tau military. Pulse weapons operate by launching an unstable particle, via an induction field, at the target. As the particle leaves the barrel of the weapon it breaks down, generating a plasma pulse of significant size. Each pulse weapon also features a gyro-stabilised aiming system, allowing for greater accuracy at extended ranges.

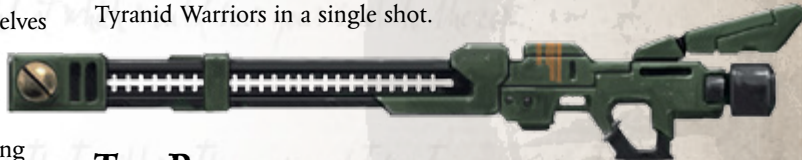
Pulse weapons are commonplace amongst the Fire caste, appearing in pistol, rifle, sniper rifle, and carbine form. The pulse carbine is of particular interest as it features an attached grenade launcher slung beneath the barrel. This launcher operates as a Mezoa grenade launcher (see page 125 of the **ROGUE TRADER** Core Rulebook).



RAIL WEAPONS

Tau rail weaponry is based on the technology of linear accelerators. The barrel of each weapon is surrounded in super-conductive electrodes. These electrodes create a wave of magnetic acceleration used to hurl projectiles at incredible velocities.

Numerous variants on this technology exist, but the two most common are the rail rifle, carried by Tau Pathfinders and sniper drones, and the heavy rail rifle mounted on Broadside Battlesuits. The rail rifle is deployed as a sniper weapon and is capable of killing even large creatures like Ogryns and Tyranid Warriors in a single shot.



TAU PHOTON GRENADE

Photon grenades are defensive weapons, meant to blind attackers as they approach and give the user a chance to strike first or escape.

Any character caught within the blast radius of a Photon Grenade must make a **Challenging (+0) Toughness Test** or be Blinded for one Round, plus one Round per Degree of Failure he scored on the Test.



TABLE 1-4: TAU WEAPONS

Name	Class	Range	RoF	Damage	Pen	Clip	Rld	Special	kg	Availability
Ion Rifle	Basic	110m	S/2/4	2d10+5 E	5	24	Full	Overcharge (6)	12	Near Unique
Kroot Hunting Rifle	Basic	150m	S/-/-	1d10+5 E	3	8	Full	Accurate	4	Extremely Rare
Longshot Pulse Rifle	Basic	200m	S/2/-	2d10+3 E	4	12	2 Full	Accurate, Tearing	8	Near Unique
Pulse Carbine	Basic	60m	S/-/3	2d10+2 E	4	24	Full	Gyro-Stabilised	6	Very Rare
Pulse Pistol	Pistol	40m	S/2/-	2d10+2 E	4	16	Half	Gyro-Stabilised	3	Very Rare
Pulse Rifle	Basic	150m	S/2/4	2d10+3 E	4	36	Half	Gyro-Stabilised	8	Very Rare
Rail Rifle	Basic	150m	S/-/-	3d10+2 I	12	12	Full	Felling, Proven (2)	8	Near Unique
Tau Photon Grenade	Thrown	SBx3m	S/-/-	-	-	-	-	Blast (12)	0.5	Rare

NEW WEAPON QUALITY: FELLING

To kill powerful foes often requires fearsome weapons or special rounds with the ability to punch through even the toughest hides. When calculating Damage from Felling weapons, reduce the target's Unnatural Toughness Bonus by one. Therefore Unnatural Toughness x3 would become x2, x2 would be removed completely, and so on. Felling only reduces Unnatural Toughness, not the target's base Toughness Bonus. The reduction occurs for calculating Damage only and does not persist.

NEW WEAPON QUALITY: PROVEN (X)

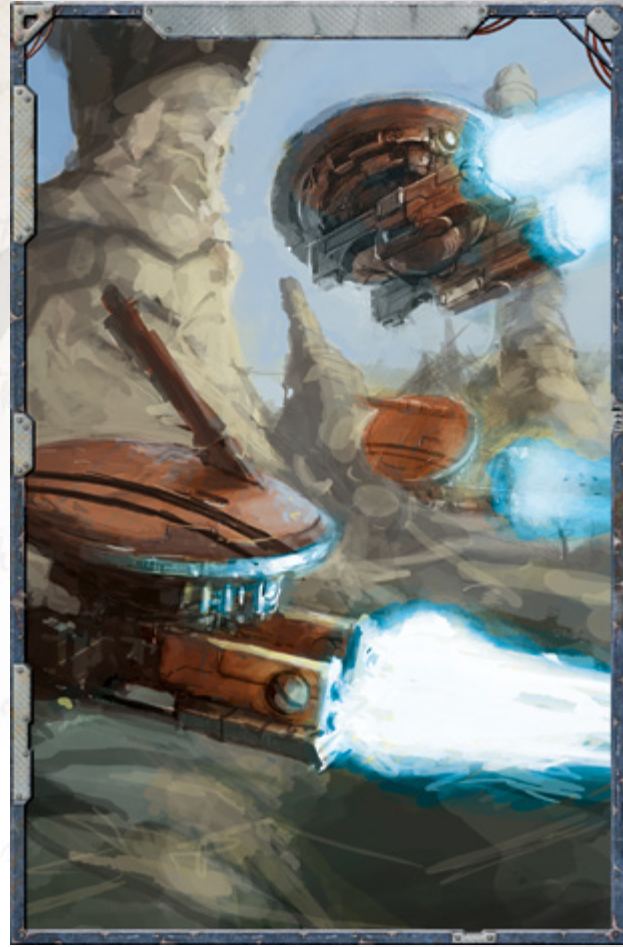
Weapons with a Proven Quality always inflict massive trauma and treat any Damage die result lower than the value of the Proven Quality (X) as if it were X instead. Thus, a Proven (3) weapon would treat any die result for Damage of 1 or 2 as a 3.

NEW WEAPON QUALITY: OVERCHARGE (X)

Weapons with the Overcharge Quality are typically safe for their users. However, their internal systems can be pushed past safe limits, allowing wielders to increase the potency of their shots at considerable personal risk. When using a weapon with the Overcharge Quality, an Explorer may choose to increase the weapon's Damage by X. If he does so, the weapon gains the Overheats Quality for those shots.

NEW WEAPON QUALITY: GYRO-STABILISED

The weapon has a small auto-stabilisation unit that is typically built towards the end of the barrel. While not as powerful as a suspensor, the gyro-stabiliser helps keep the weapon levelled at the optimal angle for firing. A Gyro-Stabilised weapon never counts its target as being further than Long Range (normal maximum range still applies). Heavy weapons with this Quality reduce the penalty for firing without Bracing to -20.



Drones possess only a simple programmed response system and, although capable of adapting to changing battlefield conditions, are often controlled directly by Fire Warriors or battlesuit pilots equipped with drone controllers.



Drone

WS	BS	S	T	Ag	Int	Per	WP	Fel
22	22	30	45	40	15	35	30	08

Movement: 6/12/18/36

Wounds: 12

Armour: Machine (4 all)

Total TB: 4

Skills: Awareness (Per), Dodge (Ag) +10

Talents: Exotic Weapon Training (Tau), Fearless, Guardian

Traits: Dark Sight, Hoverer (6), Machine (4), Size (Scrawny)

Weapons: Twin-linked pulse carbine (Basic; 60m; S/-/3; 2d0+2 E; Pen 4; Clip 24; Reload Full; Gyro-Stabilised, Twin-linked) *or* longshot pulse rifle (Basic; 200m; S/2/-; 2d10+3 E; Pen 4; Clip 12; Reload 2 Full; Accurate, Tearing)

Gear: If the drone is not equipped with a weapon, it may instead carry a markerlight or a shield generator.

Programmed Intelligence: A drone operating outside the range of a friendly drone controller (50 metres) can only perform one Half Action on each of its Turns and cannot make Reactions.

TAU DRONES

The Tau make extensive use of artificial intelligence-controlled machines called drones. These drones are most often seen on the battlefield in squads of gun drones, equipped with twin-linked pulse carbines they operate in squadrons, using their anti-gravitic motors to outmanoeuvre and surprise their prey.

A variant of the gun drone, equipped with a longshot pulse rifle and directed by markerlights, has also become a highly feared presence in the far off Eastern Rim zones of conflict.

Drones are not only equipped to deal death, however; two further models, one equipped with a markerlight and a second carrying a shield generator provide vital support for the forces of the Tau Empire.

TAU BATTLESUITS

"Your strike should land before your quarry realises that it has been launched. Kill your foe before he knows you exist and he can never pose a threat to you."

—Shas'o Haid'ur (Commander Blindside)

The Tau philosophy of warfare might revolve around ancient, timeless principles, but its practice is firmly rooted in recent innovations. The most striking and iconic of these creations is the battlesuit, and it is these humanoid machines that levels the battlefield between the Tau and the other species of the brutal 41st Millennium. The Tau might lack the brute force of the Orks, the grace of the Eldar, or humanity's savage tendency towards the overzealous application of power, but a battlesuit can allow a single warrior to compensate for these disadvantages and overcome physically superior foes through the power of technological innovation.

The Tau first began developing battlesuit technology during the First Sphere Expansion. The first generations of battlesuits, the T-series, saw use during this period of explosive growth of the Tau Empire. Though lumbering and inefficient when compared to their descendants, the T-series allowed the Fire caste to engage foes otherwise beyond their abilities—and also gave the Earth caste a critical opportunity to pioneer and field test many technologies that would be crucial to the development of later models.

HARD POINTS

Despite their size and strength, battlesuits are still limited in their ability to carry specialist equipment, particularly weaponry and experimental technologies. A battlesuit can typically only be equipped with as many Support Systems and/or Weapons Systems as it has Hard Points. The profile for each battlesuit chassis specifies the number of Hard Points a typical example would possess (see page 37–42).

The fossil-fuelled T-series was phased out in favour of the V-series within a relatively short span of time. The major innovation of this generation was replacing the relatively inefficient power source with a fission reactor capable of providing vastly more energy to the Crisis Suit and operating for longer in the field. Though early marks of the V-series inundated their pilots with deadly radiation, later models were able to account for this problem, at which point battlesuits began to be a mainstay of the military forces of the Tau Empire.

The development of flight systems was also a critical moment in the history of Tau battlesuits. This vast improvement in mobility came about during the Second Sphere Expansion, by which time battlesuits had already become indispensable to the Tau Empire's doctrine of war. The tactical and strategic flexibility afforded by the mobility of battlesuits would prove crucial to the Tau Empire's success against the vast and overwhelming forces of the Imperium of Mankind.



Many of the Tau Empire's greatest heroes are its battlesuit pilots, warriors who have earned the rank of Commander and carved their name into the memory of the Fire caste. The stories of legendary figures such as Commander Shadowsun, Shas'o Rymr, and the controversial Commander Farsight all represent crucial threads in the greater tapestry of the Tau Empire's martial history. While each of these soldiers undoubtedly earned such a position of renown in service of the Greater Good in part through tactical and strategic acumen, the Fire caste nonetheless lionises its leaders for their personal deeds of prowess and valour on the fields of war.

NANOCRYSTALLINE ARMOUR

Battlesuits are, above all, a very advanced form of armour. A battlesuit behaves as a suit of worn armour in all ways, and also provides a number of other benefits, detailed throughout this chapter.

PRIMARY SYSTEMS

The designation of battlesuit covers a broad range of weapons platforms, from the nimble XV25 Stealth Suit to the lumbering XV88 Broadside and from the mid-sized XV46 Vanguard designed for clearing space hulks to the towering XV104 Riptide capable of besieging a fortress on its own.

Still, many battlesuits share a number of key systems, and each of these systems provides certain abilities to a battlesuit. If one of these systems is ever knocked offline, it ceases to provide its benefits and cannot be used until it is repaired.

Blacksun Filtration Systems

Battlesuits are typically equipped with a sensor array that allows the pilot to pick out crucial details on the battlefield, from far-away enemy troop movements to alien creatures slithering in total darkness. These systems are also designed to shield the pilot from bursts of radiation and light that might impair his sight.

An Explorer using a battlesuit with this Primary System gains the benefits of a blacksun filter (see page 24).

BATTLESUIT CRITICAL EFFECTS

The first time an Explorer wearing a battlesuit would suffer Critical Damage each Turn, roll 1d10; on a result of 9 or higher, he suffers Critical Damage as normal. Otherwise, he does not suffer that Critical Damage; instead, roll on **Table 1-5: Battlesuit Critical Effects** and apply the result.

Removing a Battlesuit Critical Effect requires a **Hard (-20) Tech-Use or Trade (Armourer) Test** that takes at least an hour. If the mechanic succeeds on the test, he removes one Battlesuit Critical Effect of his choice, plus one additional Battlesuit Critical Effect per Degree of Success he scored on the Test.

TABLE 1-5: BATTLESUIT CRITICAL EFFECTS

Roll	Result
01-30	The shot bores into the battlesuit, shredding the armour. Add an additional +10 to rolls on this Table until the battlesuit is repaired.
31-50	The strike rips into the battlesuit, smashing one of its weapons. One of the battlesuit's Weapons or Support Systems (chosen by the attacker) is disabled and cannot be used until repaired.
51-65	The blow smashes into the battlesuit, crippling one of its key systems. One of the battlesuit's Support or Signature Systems (chosen by the attacker) is rendered inoperable and cannot be used until repaired.
66-80	The strike tears through the armour, ruining one of the battlesuit's weapons and causing its ammunition to detonate. One of the battlesuit's weapons (chosen by the attacker) is destroyed and must be replaced. Additionally, the explosion disables two of the battlesuit's Support or Signature Systems (chosen by the attacker), which are rendered inoperable and cannot be used until repaired.
81-95	The shot glances off the power core, temporarily knocking it offline in a surge of electricity. The pilot suffers 1d10 Energy Damage ignoring Armour. Additionally, the battlesuit shuts down and becomes completely inoperable until the pilot (or an external technician) dedicates a Full Action and succeeds at a Hard (-20) Tech-Use Test to bring its systems back online.
96-99	The strike pierces into the battlesuit and cooks the ammunition, causing it to detonate. The pilot suffers 1d10+5 Energy Damage ignoring Armour, and 1d5 of the battlesuit's Primary, Support, or Signature Systems (chosen by the attacker) are disabled until repaired.
100 or higher	The shot strikes the fuel core, destabilising it and causing it to overload catastrophically. The battlesuit immediately explodes into a fireball and deadly chunks of scrap metal as the reactor screams its last. The explosion causes 3d10+10 Energy Damage ignoring Armour to the pilot and 2d10+10 Energy Damage to anything with the bad luck to be within 1d10+10 metres.

Enhanced Motive Systems

Battlesuits make a Tau warrior faster, stronger, and more resilient than that individual would otherwise be.

While piloting the battlesuit, an Explorer's Strength Characteristic and Size Trait become the values listed in the battlesuit profile. Further, the pilot gains the Auto-Stabilised Trait. If this Primary System becomes disabled, any Explorer piloting the battlesuit loses the benefits that it provides and cannot undertake actions with the Move Subtype (except to exit the armour) until it is repaired. His Size Trait does not change unless he exits the battlesuit, however.

Environmental Seal

Battlesuits are designed with versatility in mind, and can be deployed in many different harsh environments, from blistering heat or wracking cold to the airless vacuum of space. Though the armour itself can be damaged by truly extreme cold or heat, the wearer is protected from toxic or harsh environments until the seal is breached.

Battlesuits are fully environmentally sealed, and their internal filtration systems can last for days or longer. So long as the suit's power source is viable and the seal remains intact, this Primary System provides the wearer with breathable air and full protection from the elements.

Jet Pack

Developed, innovated, and perfected during the period of the Second Sphere Expansion, repulsor jump jets play an incredibly important role in the utility of most battlesuits and the Tau doctrine of war at large. A jet pack allows a skilled warrior to make his battlesuit dance across the battlefield, darting out to deliver a deadly volley of fire before vanishing from his enemies' line of sight.

An Explorer wearing a battlesuit with this Primary System can make a **Routine (+20) Pilot (Personal) Test** to make a safe, guided fall from any height or a short jump over intervening terrain (or foes), landing at the end of the move. An Explorer wearing a battlesuit with this system can also make a **Challenging (+0) Pilot (Personal) Test** as a Half Action to gain the Flyer (12) Trait for up to one minute (or 1d5+10 Rounds in Structured Time).

Multi-Tracker

One of the Earth caste's sensory innovations, the multi-tracker is designed to help a pilot locate and monitor multiple threats simultaneously. The multi-tracker feeds a wealth of information about potential and identified targets directly to the operator, allowing him a clear and concise picture of what would otherwise be a chaotic battlefield.

An Explorer using a battlesuit with a multi-tracker may fire a weapon with each hand as if he had the Two-Weapon Wielder Talent. If he possesses this Talent already, he gains an additional +10 bonus to Weapon Skill and Ballistic Skill Tests when making an attack with a weapon in each hand.

SUPPORT SYSTEMS

Beyond the key systems integrated into most battlesuits, the Earth caste's ingenious engineers have developed a plethora of specialised systems to help battlesuit pilots cope with countless different threats and perils they encounter on the battlefield.

Some battlesuits incorporate Support Systems that are also wargear available to infantry. In such cases, an Explorer wearing a battlesuit with that Support System gains the benefits of having that piece of equipment (and loses those benefits if it is disabled, as with any other system). In addition, all Support Systems are assumed to be Extremely Rare when determining their Availability for the purposes of Acquisition.

Advanced Targeting System

These highly calibrated sensor systems allow the user to accurately judge the placement of shots at long distances, granting a significant boost in accuracy during sustained fire fights.

An Explorer piloting a battlesuit with this Support System may make a Called Shot Action as a Half Action.

Counterfire Defence System

One of the vulnerabilities of the Tau doctrine of war is its reliance on ranged combat. In the early days of the expansion wars, Tau forces saw massive losses due to their troop's inability to fight at close quarters. Rather than adapt their sacred doctrine, the Earth caste designed this highly advanced sensor to help keep Fire Warriors alive. The system is comprised of a series of highly sophisticated sensors able to track fast moving targets. Although not capable of tracking incoming weapons fire, the system can accurately track and predict incoming troops, alerting the users to the imminent threat.

An Explorer using a battlesuit with this Support System may re-roll failed Ballistic Skill Tests made as part of the Overwatch Action or using the Supporting Fire Trait.

Drone Controller System

A drone controller allows a warrior to more directly interface with the weapon drones assigned to him, making these AI-controlled automatons much more accurate and deadly. These systems can be integrated into a battlesuit, and many commanders favour them to make their mechanical support more useful in battle.

An Explorer using a battlesuit equipped with this Support System gains the benefits of having a drone controller (see page 24).

Early Warning Override

Similar in construction and use to the counterfire defence system, the early warning override tracks fast moving vehicles and relays the positional data to the user. This allows for accurate prediction of flight paths and other movement vectors. The override is also calibrated to detect the electronic disturbance caused by teleporter devices.

Once per Encounter, an Explorer using a battlesuit with this Support System may make an Overwatch Action as a Reaction.

Positional Relay System

This device feeds information back to a Tau force, allowing a Commander to easily and reliably deploy his forces based on the positional data it broadcasts. These systems can be carried by infantry or integrated into a battlesuit.

An Explorer using a battlesuit equipped with this Support System gains the benefits of having a positional relay (see page 25).

Stimulant Injector

A stimulant injector allows its user to inject a series of medical and combat stimulants without having to stop fighting, or fumble in a medi-kit.

Once per Round as a Free Action, an Explorer in a battlesuit with this Support System may inject a single dose of the loaded drug into his system. The injector can carry up to six doses of one or more drug. If the injector is loaded with more than one type of drug, the character may choose which drug is applied in any order.

The usual drug employed by the Tau Empire is a pain suppressant, to allow a warrior to fight beyond his usual limits. A dose of this drug allows the imbiber to ignore a single Critical Effect he is suffering until the end of the encounter, so long as this effect would not kill him outright.

Shield Generator

Often found affixed to battlesuits or drones, a Tau shield generator works something like an Imperial refractor field. The generator projects a wave of energy designed to intercept incoming projectiles and forces, redirecting them away from the projector or robbing them of all kinetic energy.

An Explorer using a battlesuit equipped with this Support System gains a Force Field with a Protection Rating of 40.

FORCE FIELDS

When a character wearing an active Force Field is hit by an attack, roll 1d100. If the result is lower than or equal to the field's Protection Rating, the attack is nullified and has no effect on the protected character. Fields can also Overload. Compare the 1d100 roll to deflect the attack to **Table 1-6: Field Craftsmanship**. If the result is lower than or equal to the listed number, the field Overloads—it deflects the hit, but then ceases to function until it is recharged or repaired (which requires a successful **Very Hard (-30) Tech-Use Test**, the use of the Luminen Charge Talent, or another appropriate action).

TABLE 1-6: FIELD CRAFTSMANSHIP

Field Craftsmanship	Overload Roll
Poor	01–20
Common	01–10
Good	01–05
Best	1



Target Lock System

Many battlesuits pilots fit their suits with target lock systems, sophisticated sets of sensors and arrays that allow the pilot to instantly identify threats and eliminate them with his battlesuit's considerable firepower.

An Explorer using a battlesuit with this Support System gains the benefit of a Target Lock (see page 25).

Vectored Retro-Thrusters

While many Crisis Suit pilots have a tendency to dart in close and strike at their foes with overwhelming firepower, few Tau relish the thought of being locked in melee combat should anything survive their salvo. Vectored retro-thrusters are designed to help compensate for this, allowing a pilot to accelerate away from his enemies as they try to cut him down.

An Explorer using a battlesuit with this Support System may make a Disengage Action as a Half Action.

Velocity Tracker

Designed to bring down flying vehicles and creatures, velocity trackers allow a battlesuit pilot to compensate for the sheer speed of his target. With one of these arrays, a skilled pilot can easily shred foes moving far too fast to hit by sight alone.

An Explorer using a battlesuit with this Support System ignores any penalties he would suffer to Ballistic Skill Tests to hit a target due to the target's movement (such as the penalty imposed upon hitting a target that undertakes the Run Action).

SIGNATURE SYSTEMS

The Tau Empire's ceaseless development of new technologies necessitates constant testing of new weaponry, armour, and wargear. These experimental technologies are often assigned to Commanders and their trusted subordinates to test in the harshest crucible of innovation: war.

Signature Systems are some of the most experimental technologies available to the Tau and are therefore exceedingly rare. As such, all Signature Systems are assumed to be Unique when determining their Availability for the purposes of Acquisition.

Command and Control Node

Though the daring heroics of lone individuals often dominate military lore, and even the selfless Tau Empire is not immune to the allure of the singular hero, coordination of the many carries the day at least as often as the daring of the few. Some battlesuit pilots employ a command and control node, a set of AI-assisted systems that allow a pilot to coordinate the fire of his teammates with pinpoint precision. The devastation that a coordinated team can wreak upon their foes often vastly exceeds what a single warrior could ever hope to inflict.

An Explorer using a battlesuit with a command and control node may make a **Challenging (+0) Tech-Use Test** as a Half Action. If he succeeds, he may choose a number of targets up to his Perception Bonus. He and each ally within 20 metres may re-roll failed Ballistic Skill Tests against the chosen targets until the beginning of the Explorer's next Turn.

Failsafe Detonator

The warriors of the Fire caste are often called upon to shed their blood on the battlefield in the name of the Greater Good, but no device better exemplifies their conviction than the failsafe detonator. This device consists of an explosive charge set to obliterate the pilot, his battlesuit, and any foes nearby, thus buying his allies a chance to win the day.

When an Explorer wearing a battlesuit with a failsafe detonator perishes, the battlesuit explodes. It is completely destroyed (along with the pilot's body), inflicting 3d10+10 Energy Damage to every target within 20 metres. Alternatively, the pilot can intentionally activate this system while he is still alive; to do so, he must pass a **Hard (-20) Willpower Test**. If he does so, the pilot suffers 3d10+10 Energy Damage ignoring Armour when the battlesuit detonates around him, as above.

Multi-spectrum Sensor Suite

Like the command and control node, the multi-spectrum sensor suite is a set of systems that allow a warrior to better coordinate his team, directing their fire. The multi-spectrum sensor suite focuses not on target priority, however, but on exposing hidden foes, using its advanced sensors to unveil enemies no matter where they hide.

An Explorer using a battlesuit with a multi-spectrum sensor suite may make a **Challenging (+0) Tech-Use Test** as a Half Action. If he succeeds, he and each ally within 20 metres ignore a number of APs of Cover until the beginning of the Explorer's next Turn. This number is equal to his Perception Bonus, plus 1 per Degree of Success he scored on the Test.



TABLE 1-7: TAU BATTLESUIT WEAPONS SYSTEMS

Name	Class	Range	RoF	Damage	Pen	Clip	Rld	Special	kg	Availability
Airbursting Fragmentation Projector	Heavy	60m	S/-/-	2d10 X	3	12	2 Full	Blast (4)	20	Near Unique
Burst Cannon	Basic	60m	-/3/6	2d10+3 E	4	40	2 Full		15	Very Rare
Heavy Burst Cannon	Heavy	80m	-/6/12	2d10+7 E	6	120	4 Full	Tearing	35	Very Rare
Cyclic Ion Blaster	Heavy	50m	S/3/6	2d10+5 E	6	100	2 Full	Overcharge (4)	25	Near Unique
Phased Ion Gun	Heavy	40m	S/4/8	1d10+9 E	4	150	2 Full	Overcharge (6)	35	Near Unique
Ion Accelerator	Heavy	200m	S/3/6	3d10+5 E	10	90	2 Full	Overcharge (8)	45	Near Unique
Fusion Blaster	Basic	20m	S/-/-	2d10+8 E	12	8	2 Full		7.5	Very Rare
Fusion Cascade	Heavy	16m	-/3/6	1d10+12 E	12	16	2 Full		20	Near Unique
Fusion Blade	Melee	-	-	2d10+8 E	12	-	-	Unstable	10	Unique
High Yield Missile Pod	Heavy	200m	S/-/6	3d10+3 X	6	72	2 Full	Blast (3)	40	Near Unique
Missile Pod	Heavy	200m	S/-/3	2d10+4 X	6	36	2 Full	Blast (2)	25	Extremely Rare
Plasma Rifle	Heavy	90m	S/2/4	2d10+4 E	10	16	Full		15	Extremely Rare
Heavy Rail Rifle	Heavy	300m	S/-/-	4d10+8 I	12	12	2 Full	Felling, Proven (3), Tearing	60	Near Unique
Onager Gauntlet	Melee	-	-	3d10+10 E	10	-	-	Power Field, Unwieldy, Shocking	20	Unique
Smart Missile System	Heavy	150m	S/-/6	2d10+4 X	4	48	2 Full		30	Very Rare

Neuroweb System Jammer

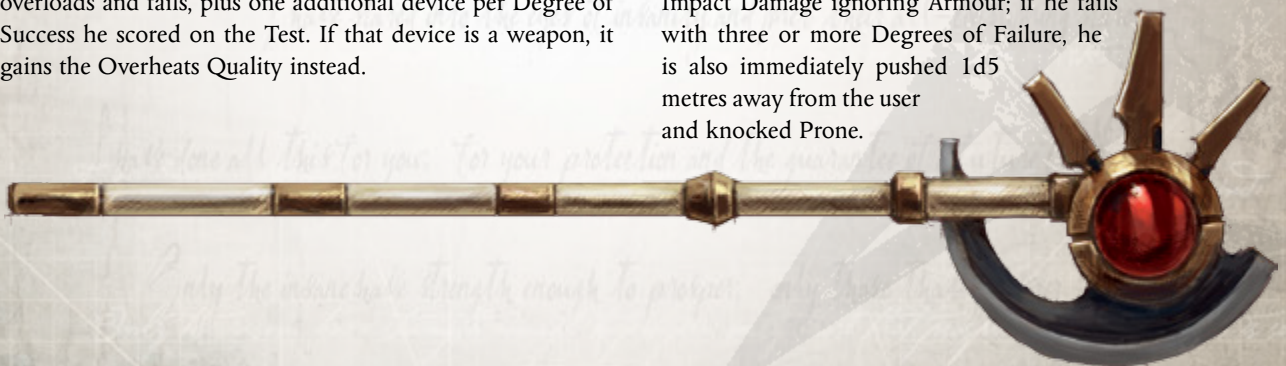
The Tau understand the power of a technological advantage as well as any force in the galaxy. The Earth caste labours not only to create new technological wonders for the Tau Empire, but also to use this superiority to widen the gap over their foes. To this end, the neuroweb system jammer is a prototype device capable of shorting out enemy weapons and machinery with a complex jamming field, denying enemies a chance to even fire before they are cut down.

An Explorer using a battlesuit with a neuroweb jammer may make a **Difficult (-10) Tech-Use Test** as a Half Action. If he succeeds, one powered device within 15 metres overloads and fails, plus one additional device per Degree of Success he scored on the Test. If that device is a weapon, it gains the Overheats Quality instead.

Repulsor Impact Field

The strange result of an attempt to reverse-engineer Ork tractor beam “technology,” the repulsor impact field is a device that projects a shockwave upon nearby foes. Though only a single working prototype exists so far, this machine’s ability to influence the flow of battle at close quarters make it a promising new weapon.

As a Half Action or Reaction, an Explorer using a battlesuit with a repulsor impact field may make an **Ordinary (+10) Tech-Use Test** to activate the device. If he succeeds, each other character within 10 metres must make a **Hard (-20) Strength Test**. If a character fails this Test, he suffers 1d10 Impact Damage ignoring Armour; if he fails with three or more Degrees of Failure, he is also immediately pushed 1d5 metres away from the user and knocked Prone.



WEAPONS SYSTEMS

Battlesuits are capable of mounting weapons far too large for normal infantry to wield without sacrificing mobility. A skilled pilot in a battlesuit can bring more firepower to bear on his own than almost any other lone warrior, and can use these deadly arms to engage and eradicate foes that no Tau could bring down singlehandedly without heavy vehicle support. Under normal circumstances, battlesuit Weapons Systems can only be used by an Explorer in a battlesuit, and some can typically only be loaded onto the larger classifications of battlesuit.

Plasma Rifle

Using similar principles to Imperial plasma weapons, a Tau plasma rifle uses a concentrated burst of super-heated gas to destroy its target. Tau plasma weapons are, in general, safer than their Imperial equivalents, sacrificing a modicum of firepower by lowering the overall temperature of the gas. This has led to an elimination of the critical overheat problems that plague little-understood archeotech relics such as plasma weapons, but has also resulted in a weapon with slightly less damage output overall. These weapons are only ever mounted on Tau battlesuits, which can wield such bulky armaments with ease.

Airbursting Fragmentation Projector

Recently cleared for field use, the airbursting fragmentation projector launches a proximity detonated, exploding projectile. Linked into a battlesuit's sensor suite, a pilot is capable of determining the exact angle to fire at in order to achieve best results on any target in range. The projectile explodes in the air above the target, filling the area with lethal shards of shrapnel. This weapon has shown great success when deployed against massed infantry regiments and troops dug in behind cover.

Attacks made with an airbursting fragmentation projector ignore all APs of Cover from which the target is benefitting.

Burst Cannon

Based off the same plasma pulse generation technology as the pulse rifle and its associated variants, the burst cannon is a multi-barrel assault weapon capable of very high rates of fire. Usually mounted on the Tau Stealth battlesuit, the relatively short range of this gun is outweighed by its capacity to inflict massive casualties on lighter armoured troops.



Heavy Burst Cannon

A drastically oversized version of a standard burst cannon, the heavy burst cannon fires plasma bursts in much the same way as Tau pulse weapons. Its six rotating barrels allow it to maintain an unprecedented rate of fire, which it can overcharge even further by drawing upon the XV104's nova reactor.

A heavy burst cannon is a truly enormous weapon capable of pouring out great blazing gouts of fire. Typically, it cannot be mounted on any battlesuit smaller than a mighty XV104 Riptide.

Cyclic Ion Blaster

An experimental weapon that combines the designs of the burst cannon and the ion rifle, this quad-barrelled weapon fires a rapid stream of ion radiation capable of annihilating lightly armoured troops. The design, however, is not perfect. Although the rate of fire is stable, the ion radiation is still quite unpredictable, resulting in an uneven performance when deployed against armour.

Phased Ion Guns

Phased ion guns represent an attempt to downscale the vehicle-mounted ion cannon and thus create a mass-production version of the cyclic ion blaster for use on battlesuits. These double-barrelled guns are usually underslung from the XV9's arms, and have proven deadly against armoured infantry and vehicles alike.

Ion Accelerator

Tau ion weapons shoot streams of high-energy particles that blast apart their targets, leaving smouldering holes in their wake. The ion accelerator's blast, however, is more akin to a torrent, melting its targets entirely. This massive weapon rips through armoured fortifications with ease, and can amplify its killing power even further by drawing extra power from an XV104's nova reactor.

An ion accelerator is massive, and capable of turning entire squads of heavily armoured soldiers into molten slag in mere moments. It would be a fool's errand to attempt to mount such a weapon on any frame or chassis smaller than an XV104 Riptide.

Missile Pod

Mounted exclusively on Tau battlesuits, the missile pod weapon technology is used by the Tau to engage light vehicles. Although not as powerful as a Krak warhead, and lacking the damage radius of frag missile, Tau missiles are nevertheless still very dangerous. Capable of rapid fire, they can shred infantry transports, skimmers, and other light vehicles with ease.

High-Yield Missile Pod

Even more potent than their smaller counterparts, high-yield missile pods are capable of shattering heavier armoured vehicles and tearing aircraft from the sky.



Smart Missile System

By equipping missiles with simple AIs based on those used in drones, the Earth caste has created a self-guiding weapon.

A smart missile system lets a warrior engage foes that he cannot even see, provided he knows their rough location. This gives a pilot an incredible amount of tactical flexibility, helping him force entrenched foes out of cover and obliterating ambushes before the would-be attackers can even spring them.

So long as an Explorer wielding a smart missile system knows his opponent's location, he does not require line of sight to fire this weapon upon it. To hit a target out of his line of sight, he makes a **Challenging (+0) Intelligence Test** in lieu of any Ballistic Skill Tests he would make as part of the Attack Action.

Fusion Blaster

Similar in design and effect to the Imperium's melta weaponry, the fusion blaster agitates the sub-atomic particles of the target, causing a massive build-up of heat. Living targets are often completely vaporised and non-living targets reduced to molten slag. These weapons are often deployed on Stealthsuits, allowing Tau pilots to strike at the exposed rear armours of enemy vehicles or conduct lightning raids to destroy important fortifications.

Fusion Blade

A rare relic only ever seen in the hands of the warriors of the Farsight Enclaves, a fusion blade allows a warrior to channel the effects of a fusion blaster in close quarters, searing apart an enemy with a deadly edge made of pure energy. Fusion blades have a dramatic effect, but are notoriously unreliable for Tau technology, often sputtering out in the midst of a deadly combat and leaving their wielders unarmed.

A fusion blade can also be fired as a fusion blaster so long as it remains functional. If an Explorer fails a Weapon Skill Test with a Fusion Blade with a number of Degrees of Failure greater than his Weapon Skill Bonus, it ceases to function and cannot be used until repaired.

Fusion Cascade

A modified version of the standard fusion blaster that trades raw power for a vastly improved rate of fire, this weapon was designed for use with the larger XV9 Hazard Suits. A fusion cascade unleashes a blistering torrent of energy that punches holes in armour with ease and transforms everything else in its path to swirling ash.

Heavy Rail Rifle

The larger and more brutal cousin of the rail rifle, the heavy rail rifle is an anti-armour cannon, used to demolish enemy vehicles from long range or tear massive creatures limb from limb from well outside their effective range. This devastating weapon is often mounted on XV88 BroadSides, for only these modified variants of the XV8 Crisis Suit can effectively fire such colossal weapons.

Onager Gauntlet

An experimental technology created by the Earth caste in a moment of great need, the onager gauntlet is a melee weapon—one of only a few ever designed for use with a Crisis Suit. These devices were few in number to begin with, and almost all were lost on the battlefield in the wake of their use.

An onager gauntlet cannot be used for a Swift Attack or Lightning Attack Action.



TAU BATTLESUIT PROFILES

These profiles detail the battlesuits available to Tau Explorers. Each profile includes a number of specifications and available systems, presented as follows:

Armour Points: How many Armour Points the battlesuit provides for the locations listed. This functions in exactly the same manner as Armour Points detailed on page 137 of the **ROGUE TRADER** Core Rulebook.

Hard Points: The number of Hard Points available to the battlesuit for Support and Weapon Systems (see **Hard Points** on page 28).

Size: The Size Trait applied to the wearer of the battlesuit. See the Enhanced Motive Primary System on page 31.

Strength: The Strength Characteristic of the battlesuit. See the Enhanced Motive Primary System detailed on page 31.

Primary Systems: The Primary Systems (see pages 29 and 31) installed in the battlesuit. These systems are integral and do not count against the Hard Points of the battlesuit.

Recommended Loadout: Common selections of Support and Weapon Systems for each class of battlesuit.

Availability: This identifies the battlesuit's Availability (see page 111 of the **ROGUE TRADER** Core Rulebook).

XV25 STEALTH BATTLESUIT

The lightest and nimblest battlesuit in widespread use, the XV25 Stealth suit is the successor to the older XV15 Stealth suit. This battlesuit is designed for infiltration and striking at unprotected flanks to sow confusion amidst the enemy lines. An XV25 Stealth suit is only slightly larger than an armoured Fire Warrior, but the strength augmentations allow its wearer to carry larger weapons such as burst cannons and fusion blasters, and its jet pack makes it vastly more mobile than an infantry soldier. The true technological coup behind these smaller battlesuits, however, are the stealth field generators that each one carries, shrouding it from all but the most comprehensive scans and making it extremely difficult to track, especially when in cover. A skilled Stealth Team using these battlesuits can easily eliminate key targets and turn the tide of a battle before vanishing into the smoke and ash.

Armour Points: 8 All

Hard Points: 2

Size: Hulking

Strength: 45

Primary Systems: Blacksun filters, enhanced motive systems, environmental seal, jet pack, multi-tracker

Recommended Loadout: Burst cannon *or* fusion blaster, target lock

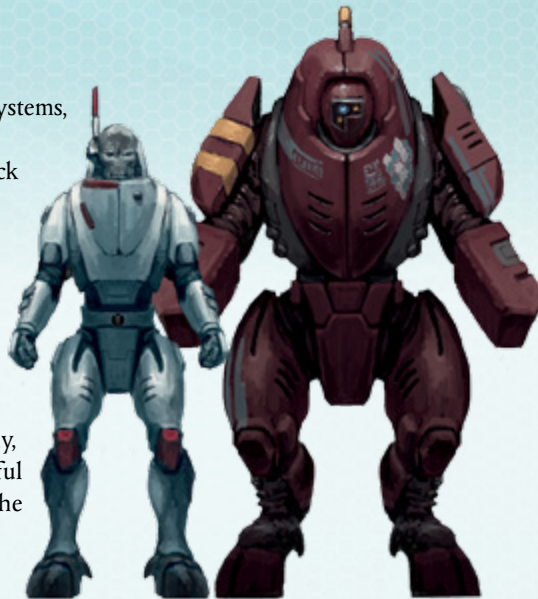
Availability: Near Unique

Special Rules

Stealth battlesuits are equipped with integral stealth field generators that grant them the following benefits:

Stealth

An Explorer wearing an XV25 Stealth battlesuit suffers no penalty to Concealment Tests from his Size Trait. Additionally, he scores an additional two Degree of Success on successful Concealment, Dodge, Shadowing, and Stealth Tests thanks to the armour's chameleonic properties.



XV8 CRISIS BATTLESUIT

The most iconic of the Tau Empire's many mobile weapons of war, the mass production model XV8 Crisis Battlesuit has carried countless battles for the Tau Empire. Its mobility, resilience, and the overwhelming firepower it can mount all make the XV8 one of the deadliest weapons platforms available, and almost all members of the Fire caste aspire to reach the lofty ranks of those entrusted with such machines. Many of the greatest heroes of the Fire caste won their names in these armoured war machines, though to even reach the rank of Shas'ui to become a pilot is a gruelling task to which few are equal. Still, the prestige associated with piloting a Crisis Battlesuit is not unfounded; ensconced in this armour, a warrior becomes far more than he once was, a force of destruction capable of standing toe-to-toe with some of the deadliest warriors in the galaxy and not merely surviving, but winning.

Armour Points: 10 All

Hard Points: 3

Size: Enormous

Strength: 55

Primary Systems: Blacksun filters, enhanced motive systems, environmental seal, jet pack, multi-tracker

Recommended Loadout: Fusion blaster *or* plasma rifle *or* burst cannon, burst cannon *or* flamer, target lock *or* vectored retro-thrusters

Availability: Near Unique



XV9 HAZARD BATTLESUIT

The XV9 Hazard Close Support Armour—the XV9 Hazard Battlesuit in shorthand—is one result of the Earth caste's research into large battlesuits. Though each XV9 is a considerable investment to construct, these battlesuits have proven their worth to many Fire caste Commanders time and time again. The XV9 is extremely adept at engaging foes at close range, searing them apart with incredibly potent armaments while using its photon casters and vectored retro-thrusters to stay just out of reach. Its larger size also provides its pilot with a greater degree of protection—an asset that Commanders have often taken advantage of by placing these suits in the way of a superior force while the rest of their warriors move into position for the killing blow. Acting as the bait in the Tau doctrine of war is not an easy task, and typically only extremely hardened veterans who can use the particular abilities of these battlesuits to full effect are given XV9 Hazard Battlesuits.

Armour Points: 14 All

Hard Points: 4

Size: Enormous

Strength: 65

Primary Systems: Blacksun filters, enhanced motive systems, environmental seal, jet pack, multi-tracker

Recommended Loadout: Two fusion cascades *or* two twin-linked burst cannons *or* two phased ion guns, vectored retro-thrusters, drone controller *or* target lock

Availability: Near Unique

Special Rules

XV9 Hazard Battlesuits are designed to fight at close quarters, blasting their foes apart and blinding them with their photon casters before darting away. These battlesuits possess from the following wargear:

Photon Casters

These knee-mounted defensive weapons discharge bursts of light that dazzle the pilot's foes, leaving them vulnerable or giving the pilot a chance to escape from close engagements.

As a Half Action or Reaction, the pilot of an XV9 Hazard Battlesuit may make a **Routine (+20) Ballistic Skill Test** to use the photon casters to blind his foes. If he succeeds, the battlesuit fires a charge that explodes with the effects of a Tau photon grenade (see page 27), centred on itself.

XV8-05 "ENFORCER" CRISIS BATTLESUIT

Yet another variant of the redoubtable XV8 Crisis Battlesuit, the XV8-05 "Enforcer" Crisis Battlesuit is larger and more imposing than many other versions. It is favoured by numerous Commanders, and its distinctive design allows allies and enemies alike to quickly identify its wearer as a warrior to be feared and respected.

Armour Points: 11 All

Hard Points: 4

Size: Enormous

Strength: 60

Primary Systems: Blacksun filters, enhanced motive systems, environmental seal, jet pack, multi-tracker

Recommended Loadout: Fusion blaster *or* plasma rifle *or* cyclic ion blaster, burst cannon *or* flamer, target lock, shield generator *or* vectored retro-thrusters

Availability: Unique



XV8-02 "IRIDIUM" CRISIS BATTLESUIT

An incredibly rare variant of the XV8 Crisis Suit, the XV8-02 "Iridium" Crisis Suit is shielded with a prototype iridium alloy that grants it unparalleled protection. These suits are often given to particularly valuable leaders, to prevent attempts at assassination by the enemy.

Armour Points: 15 All

Hard Points: 3

Size: Enormous

Strength: 55

Primary Systems: Blacksun filters, enhanced motive systems, environmental seal, jet pack, multi-tracker

Recommended Loadout: Twin-linked fusion blaster *or* twin-linked plasma rifle, burst cannon *or* flamer, shield generator *or* stimulant injectors

Availability: Unique



XV88 BROADSIDE BATTLESUIT

Built to mount massive weapons such as the heavy rail rifle and high-yield missile pods, the bulky XV88 Broadside sacrifices manoeuvrability and speed for raw destructive power. These large battlesuits are frequently positioned far from the front lines, for they can bring their deadly armaments to bear upon almost any target within their line of sight, even at incredible range. To compensate for their lack of mobility, Broadside's are also incredibly durable, and can shrug off all but the most piercing shots with their heavy armour.

Armour Points: 15 All

Hard Points: 3

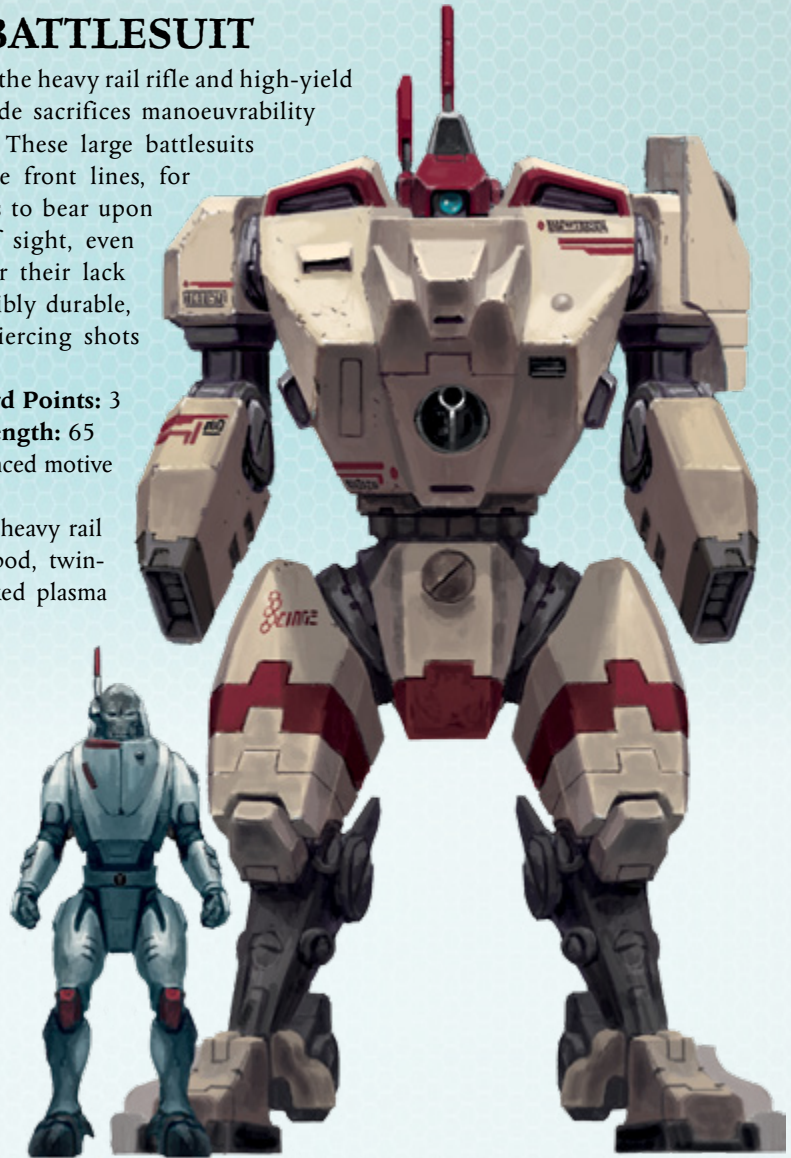
Size: Enormous

Strength: 65

Primary Systems: Blacksun filters, enhanced motive systems, environmental seal, multi-tracker

Recommended Loadout: Twin-linked heavy rail rifle *or* twin-linked high-yield missile pod, twin-linked smart missile system *or* twin-linked plasma rifle, target lock *or* velocity tracker

Availability: Near Unique



XV104 RIPTIDE

The largest and most recently deployed battlesuit in use by the Tau Empire, the XV104 Riptide made its shocking debut at Mu'gulath Bay during the Third Sphere Expansion. There, twelve of these massive prototypes were sent against an Imperial fortress world by Commander Shadowsun, who used their overwhelming power to carry the day against superior numbers and an entrenched position. Thanks to its experimental and sometimes unpredictable Nova reactor, the XV104 is capable of overcharging most of its main systems, from its brutal weapons to its shield generator to its engines. Though using the nova reactor can be dangerous to the pilot, it can often give the warrior within the edge needed to carry the day in the name of the Greater Good.

Armour Points: 14 All

Hard Points: 3

Size: Massive

Strength: 80

Primary Systems: Blacksun filters, enhanced motive systems, environmental seal, jet pack, multi-tracker

Recommended Loadout: Heavy burst cannon *or* ion accelerator, twin-linked smart missile system *or* twin-linked plasma rifle *or* twin-linked fusion blaster, shield generator

Availability: Unique

XV104 RIPTIDE (CONTINUED)

Special Rules

Each XV104 Riptide contains a dangerous and experimental drive called a nova reactor. While this engine is normally relatively safe, the pilot can push it to extremes to draw more power for its weapons, shields, or engines, risking considerable personal harm that he might serve the Greater Good.

Nova Charge

Once per Round, as a Half Action or Reaction, an Explorer piloting a Riptide may overload the nova reactor and make a **Difficult (-10) Tech-Use Test**. If he fails the Test, he suffers 1 Damage ignoring Armour and Toughness Bonus as the reactor violently overheats, plus 1 additional Damage per Degree of Failure he scored on the Test. If he succeeds, the Explorer applies one of the following benefits to the Riptide until the end of his next Turn:

- The Riptide gains a Force Field with a Protection Rating of 10, plus 10 per Degree of Success the Explorer scored on the Test (to a maximum of 95). This Field does not Overload.
- One of the Riptide's weapons gains the Storm Quality.
- One of the Riptide's weapons gains the Overcharge (5) Quality or increases its Overcharge Quality's value by 5.
- The Riptide increases the value of its Flyer Trait by 1, plus 1 per Degree of Success the Explorer scored on the Test.

