

Total War: Warhammer 40k
PbP-Edition

Ghost of War

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CHAPTER 1: GAMEPLAY

INTRODUCTION

This documents attempts to provide a collection of basic rules enabling players and GMs to play a strategic wargame set in the grim-dark future of the 42nd millenia and explore the depth and scale of the warhammer universe. Players will take on the mantle of a powerful faction leader of the Imperium of Men and seek to defend and where possible expand their factions influence, power and area of control by any means necessary.

The game system does not go into detail about the themes, unit types, sub-factions or nomenclature of the warhammer universe, assuming interested players are familiar with most, filling the remainder as required by reading up on any of the fan-written wiki resources¹.

The game system is taking heavy inspiration from the Total War game series, especially the Warhammer Fantasy installations, combined with the hex-based map known from the civilizations game series. It is far from complete at this stage and there are many more subsystems planned for the future, including a more differentiated resource and supply system, planet advancements and character development for commanders and heroes.

SECTOR MAP

The game uses a map with a hex grid, with each grid representing a several cubic light year large portion of space. Imperial and known enemy systems are shown on the map but it is important to keep in mind that vast volumes of space between these known systems are partly or even completely unknown, so an empty grid is by no means devoid of any star systems. Even in a future where there is only war, human-inhabited planets are rediscovered even within well-charted and traveled sectors of the Imperium - not to mention systems infested with terrifying Xenos.

In addition to the known systems, the positions of each players commanders are denoted as well as known (or suspected) positions of large enemy battle groups.

EVENTS

Events are the prime tool for the GM to present the players with a dynamic, ever-changing

¹e.g. https://warhammer40k.fandom.com/wiki/Warhammer_40k_Wiki

galaxy. Events have a couple of properties which are explained in the following subsections. For an example event layout, see the sidebar below.

ORIGIN

The origin of the message or the location of the event.

SEVERITY

The events are pre-sorted and categorized by aides into the following three severity categories:

- **Minoris:** Considered unimportant by most of the aides, someone decided to relay the information to their superiors anyway. Most events in this category are used to create the impression of a living galaxy. However they are an excellent tool to foreshadow coming changes or bigger events and as always, the severity of an event changes rapidly with perspective. Minor events have only a minor gameplay effect (e.g. prolonging a recruitment process by one round, expenditure of an additional SP during upkeep phase) if they have one at all.
Examples: sabotage in a local manufactoria, small civil unrest in a Hive, spreading non-lethal illness in ones troops, intercepted heavily encrypted vox traffic of unknown origin, unexpected warp-travel signatures approaching the system and so on.
- **Capitalis:** Important events, noteworthy of the attention of the faction leader. Events in the Capitalis category will most likely impact the strategic considerations of the players. They have a notable gameplay impact and/or limit the available options.
Examples: civil war on a planet, damaged warp drives, attack on an important supply depot, uncovered activity of a villain (enemy hero), intelligence on enemy troop movement.
- **Critical:** Faction-specific, highly important event impacting a faction asset, faction leader or an event of sector-wide impact.
Examples: an attack or lost communication with a faction hold, large Ork Waaagh! or Hive Fleet on the move.

EFFECT

The direct gameplay effect of the event - if any. Common effects include: change in warp travel time, change in production time, change in unit morale or hp, modified supply situation, ...

DURATION

Many events are snapshots of a situation and do not have a noteworthy duration. Snapshot events are denoted by a simple dash in the duration property. Other events may have a fixed duration (given in rounds) or are simply considered ongoing if no exact duration can be given.

RELIABILITY

Information in the Imperium are transported via astropathic link. Longer range communication is usually taking several hops, that is they are transmitted, transcribed then retransmitted by another astropathic quire. Thus the number of hops can be used as a metric for the reliability of the transmitted information. A zero-hop information (direct link) is usually considered very precise while the same message after five or more hops is considered all but useless by most.

WAAAGH! SNAGGATOOTH MOVES!

- **Origin:** Sub-Sector Magnifica Imperialis. Archbishop Pontius Crucius.
- **Severity:** Capitalis
- **Effect:** -
- **Duration:** Unknown.
- **Reliability:** 1
- **Brief:** First elements of WAAAGH! Snaggatooth have been sighted within Sub-Sector Magnifica Imperialis, performing destructive raids of outlying systems. Large fleet movements detected by local astropaths, indicating the long expected assault is finally on the way towards the main system.

REQUESTS

Requests are a special type of events, representing the request of a influential group or individual towards one or more players. Requests have the same properties as events but also add the following information:

CONTRACTOR

The person or faction to propose the request as well as some background information of the person or institution in question - if available.

CONTRACT

Brief summary of what is asked and what is offered in return (if any).

REQUEST FOR ASTARTES FORCE

- **Contractor:** Magos-Explorator Zizar Rex (Adeptus Mechanicus)
- **Contract:** In exchange for a Tactical Squad of Astartes to accompany him on a dangerous excavation site within non-imperial territory, the Magos offers an entire shipping of ammunition, ranging from bolter shells to void torpedoes as well as a share of the spoils from his excavation endeavor.
- **Decision Due:** 1 round

GAMEPLAY PHASES

During a round, there are four phases.

- **Event-Phase:** Right at the beginning of a turn, a list of new and ongoing events is listed by the GM.
- **Action-Phase:** In this phase, the players plan their actions and commit to them. Stances for all armies are selected and heroes may use their active skills. Production plans are communicated and units recruited. Diplomacy happens.
- **Resolution-Phase:** Wars are fought, lost and won in this phase, be they be chosen by the players or triggered by the foe. Fate dice are tossed in this round.
- **Upkeep-Phase:** At the end of a round, bookkeeping is done. Experience is tracked and noted down. Supply situation is updated. Progress of any ongoing production, recovery or recruitment process is tracked.

CHAPTER 2: UNITS & BATTLEGROUPS

UNITS

Units are the building blocks of the military force of a faction. The scale of a single unit varies greatly between (and even within) factions. While the Imperial Guard fields sprawling regiments several hundreds strong, the Adeptus Astartes deploy single squad units or even a single Dreadnought. The Adeptus Mechanicus can field its Skitarii forces in a similar fashion as a Guard Regiment, but has also access to Titans, which are deployed alone or in hunting packs of two.

STATS

All units have two stats: HP and Morale. Both are measured in percentages.

- **HP:** represents the physical status of the unit, whether it is the wellbeing of mortal troops or the hull integrity of a void ship. HP is lost during combat and recovers when the unit receives necessary supplies and the time to do so (see section 4). A units HP can never rise above 100%. Should a units HP drop to 0% it is destroyed.
- **Morale:** represents the mental status of the unit. A low morale reduces the combat effectiveness considerably, while a high morale may drive a unit to new heights. A units morale may rise above 100% (e.g. by the skills of linked commanders and heroes). Should a units morale drop to 0%, it will break and attempt to flee the battlefield. Depending on the outcome of the war, such a unit may be run down by the enemy, field executed by their own or actually survive to life with the shame of cowardice.

From HP and Morale a units current Combat Effectiveness (CE) is derived, which determines the strength of a unit during a fight.

- **CE:** $HP \times \frac{Morale}{100}$

BATTLE GROUPS & UNITS

A Battle Group is a collection of units, lead by a commander. Given the nature of warfare in the grim-dark future, a Battle Group is (usually) accompanied by or comprised of Imperial Navy elements, providing inter- and intra-system transport, protection and supply storage for the units making up the Battle Group. In game, a Battle Group can be called any number of things like Army, Fleet, Crusade, or Strike Group.

These are all well and good and their use is encouraged, but this document will stick with Battle Group for clarity. Units are the smaller parts that make up the whole that is the Battle Group.

Any Battle Group is lead by a Commander and may be accompanied by a number of heroes.

COMMANDERS & HEROES

A commander is an accomplished leader of a faction who is put in command of a Battle Group. The faction leader of each faction is the overall commander and usually the commander of the key forces of the faction and is considered a Hero as well (see below). Secondary Commanders can be assigned to new Battle Groups as necessary. Commanders can gain traits and followers (advisors, bodyguards, ...) during the course of their career.

Heroes are singular entities renowned throughout their factions and possibly beyond. Heroes can move around on their own - they do not need a commander or large fleet. A single small warp-capable ship will suffice. Heroes can be linked to a Battle Group, providing a morale boost to all units therein. Whether or not they are linked to a Battle Group, heroes have different skills they can use to influence the world around them. One hero can only use one active skill per round. Similar to Commanders, heroes will acquire traits and followers throughout their career.

SKILLS

Skills appear in two variants: General (passive) and Unique (active) skills.

- **General:** Skills in this category are passive in nature and (usually) revolve around strengthening own units, speeding up (re-)deployment or reducing travel time. Secondary Commanders and heroes start with one randomly determined General skill. Faction leaders start with two. The following list offers a selection of the most common General skills available, but the GM and players are encouraged to come up with additional ones.
- **Command Authority:** Units of the associated Battle Group have a slightly increased morale (10%) and take no CE penalty when cooperating with allied forces in the same battlefield.

- **Cooperative Forces:** The Battle Group has an increased CE when fielded alongside allied units.
- **Rapid Relocation:** Efficient protocols reduce the (re-)deployment delay of the Battle Group by one round.
- **Omnipresent Logistics:** Battle Group units have a 10% increased recovery rate.
- **Crash Course Recruitment:** Unit recruitment in the local system is reduced by 25% to a minimum of one round.
- **Unique:** Skill of this group are unique to a character, allowing him to influence his environment in a specific and active manner. Secondary Commanders and Heroes start with one such skill, while faction leaders start with two. The following are examples to spark the creativity of GM and players alike.
 - **Pulled from the Brink:** The character is determined to not let any void ship go to waste even if others consider it beyond salvation. He can spend a full round to analyze the hulks of a void battle in the order to seek out salvageable wreckage. Such ships are considered at 0% HP and can be repaired according to the normal rules (see section 4). He has also a chance to find usable ship parts when doing so.
 - **Screening Protocol:** The Apothecari routinely screens the population of visited worlds to find suitable candidates for Astartes initiation. When performing this action for one or more rounds, he has a chance to detect genestealer infestations, mutations and diseases in the population in addition to a chance of finding new Neophytes for his chapter.
 - **Artificer:** Given enough time and access to resources, the Master of the Forge (Tech Marine Hero) is able to craft even the most advanced war-gear of the chapter, including Terminator armor (*Part, Chapter Hold, 8 rounds*) and Dreadnought chassis (*Chapter Hold, 16 rounds*). This action requires the Battle Group or chapter hold to use the Produce stance (see section 4) but does not count against its production slots.
 - **Purge:** The Commissar is signing a Battle Group or even system wide order to purge the unclean. Any unit of the Battle Group that has one of the following traits will suffer HP damage and loses the trait: Infected, Infested (Genestealers), Mutated, Poisoned. A system wide order will inflict HP damage to a planet and has a chance to fully remove the trait from the local population.

TRAITS & FOLLOWERS

During their career, commanders and heroes can accumulate character traits through special actions. Traits are usually passive in nature and provide a benefit in a very specific situation. Followers on the other hand represent the exalted personnel making up a characters counselorium. Most followers increase the efficiency of the character in handling a certain unit type or better the cooperation with other factions. New followers are usually gained through contracts or critical faction events. A character can have an unlimited number of traits but only ever have six followers in his staff. Should a character have more than six followers, he can change the composition of his counselorium once per year. Commanders and heroes start the game with a single trait and no followers. The side bars below give examples for traits and a followers.

SIEGE EXPERT [TRAIT]

Through fighting years upon years of bloody sieges, the character has developed a high mastery in this particular area of warfare. Units of his Battle Group suffer 5% less HP and Morale damage from ongoing sieges, while the enemy suffers an additional 5% Morale penalty per round he is besieged.

KNOW THE PATH [TRAIT]

The character may see patterns and causations in navigational data that others do not. This allows him to plot safe paths through normally impassable or hazardous areas.

NAVY ATTACHÉE [FOLLOWER]

The character has won the loyalty and duty of a long-term Navy officer for his staff. His experience and connections increase the reputation with any Navy characters by 20. It does also boosts the Battle Groups CE considerably, if Navy assets are available in orbit over a contested world.

EXPERIENCED NAVIGATOR [FOLLOWER]

This particular experienced Navigator of a high-standing family is well able to steer the ships of the characters Battle Group through dangerous passages and even dares to steer the ships close to (or even into) warp storms or the shadow of the warp - although the latter is far from recommended.

CHAPTER 3: SUPPLIES & PRODUCTION

SUPPLIES

Fleets, planets and Battle Groups require supplies to keep fighting and producing. A simplified system of Supply Points (SP) representing all resources will be used to reduce complexity at the outset. Depending on the stance the unit or planet assumes, it may increase or lower its current supply points by a certain amount. Should an entity run out of supply points, it will start taking CE damage each round in addition to a serious decline in effective fighting power should it be attacked by the enemy.

PRODUCTION

Planets throughout the Imperium are geared towards the production of a wild variety of goods required by its fighting forces be it ammunition, tanks, fuel or new recruits. Planets (and other production facilities) can assume the production stance to unlock the full potential of its manufactoria. Taking on that stance opens the production slots of the entity, which can be either used to restock supply points or to recruit new units. Production slots are divided into three levels, representing the technology required to produce goods of that level.

- **Minima:** Basic goods that can be produced on nearly any Imperial planet. One Minima slot can produce one SP per round.
- **Vexillus:** Industrial-grade goods which can be produced on most civilized worlds of the Imperium but which are not available on more archaic worlds. One Vexillus slot can produce two SP round.
- **Exactus:** Highly advanced technology that can only be produced on forge worlds or a few other places with a high density of high-ranking Tech priests. An Exactus slot can produce three SP per round.

LOGISTIC GROUPS

Very large fleets are usually accompanied by at least one but possibly several ship groups tasked with producing the most important goods (food, ammunition) on-the-fly, especially if supply lines are expected to be threatened or unreliable. Such groups usually have a Goliath-class factory ship at their heart as well as a host of smaller vessels tasked with mining asteroids, gas nebulae, and stellar winds for base resources which are then processed by the Goliath into ammunition, wargear, tools, armor

plating and most other industrial-grade goods the fleet requires.

A single logistic group can store six SP and has 2 Minima and 2 Vexillus production slots if it assumes the Production stance. Thus, a single logistic group can produce a up to a total of 6 SP per round.

- **Astartes Chapter Fleet:** Start with two logistic groups.
- **Ad-Mech Explorator Fleet:** Start with two logistic groups and may include an Ark Mechanicus, which has the following profile.
Slots: 2||2||2 (up to 12 SP).

CHAPTER 4: COMBAT

STANCES

The exact upkeep cost of an entity is decided by the Stance(s) it is assuming during a round. Five types of Stances are defined here. Some of these can be combined. In such a case, add together the upkeep cost of each activity to get the total upkeep. If two Stances reduce Warp travel, that penalty does not stack.

- **Idle:** This is the most basic "activity" possible and is generally frowned upon. This is only acceptable during times of severe resource shortage. Entities in this stance try to keep their upkeep as low as possible. Units are confined to their base without field training, planets stop their industry and send their workers home and fleets are put into high anchor or a stable orbit.
 - **Cost:** 0 SP.
 - Planets and other producers lose their basic production and halt any projects and recruitments.
 - Units lose 1 experience point per round while staying idle.
 - This activity cannot be combined with other activities.
- **Move:** Moving a single star ship through the void is a costly endeavor, but moving an entire fleet with accompanying ground forces is a herculean effort.
 - **Cost:** 1 SP.
 - Unlocks inter-system warp travel and large scale intra-system ground force redeployment.
 - This can be combined with: Produce, Brace and Recover. If combined with Produce, reduce the number of hexes you can travel by half rounded down.
- **Produce:** This activity represents the expenditure of resources to produce something (usually supplies, a unit, or a planetary advancement). See table 5.2 for example unit production projects.
 - **Cost:** 2 SP.
 - Unlocks the production slots of the entity (if any).
 - Unlocks the basic production of the entity (if any).
- **Brace:** Being prepared for war can be a matter of life and death in the endless wars of the 42nd millennium. Units have to perform regular live-fire drills and regular combat exercises to keep their edge. Planetary defense forces need regular drills as well. Walls and

gun emplacements need to be repaired and calibrated. Fleets have to patrol and perform maneuvers. Orbital defenses require regular maintenance and calibration just like ground emplacements.

- **Cost:** 2 SP.
- Units gain one experience point per turn
- Non-Unit entities (e.g. planets) can raise their CE beyond 100% by taking this action. It rises by 10% per round to a maximum of 150%.
- Units taking this activity gain the 'on guard' trait for the duration of the activity thus raising the chance to detect enemy activity in the local area.
- Can be combined with the Move, Recover and Produce activities.
- If combining this stance with Produce, non-unit entities reduce their base production and available production slots by half (round up).
- **Fight:** In the far future, there is only war. While not entirely accurate for every world in the Imperium, it certainly is for the Imperium at large. War is an unmatched devourer of resources such as food, medical supplies, ammunition, soldiers, war-gear; all are spent in vast quantities every day to keep the Imperium intact for just one more day. This activity represents a major military conflict, leaving no time for anything else besides. Minor military activity such as guard duty, light skirmishes, or patrolling fall under Brace.
 - **Cost:** 3 SP.
 - Units gain experience from combat. This can range from 2 to 8 experience points depending on the scale and length of the fighting as well as the outcome - victory yields more than defeat.
 - Units cannot combine this stance with any other.
 - Non-Unit entities can combine this stance with any other as long as its CE remains above 50% with the following constraints:
 - * Does no longer benefit from trade routes.
 - * Production slots and base production are halved (round down)
 - * Any recruitment process has a 33% chance to not make any process during any given round due to enemy intervention.
 - * CE increase from the Brace and Recover stance are reduced by half (round down).
- **Recover:** Combat losses and collateral

damage are inevitable in the struggle for mankind's survival. Restoring good order, repairing damaged war-gear, and filling up the losses with new recruits is the purview of the Recover activity. The resource demands between two given units can be very large, thus the abstract notion of recovery points (RP) is used. The higher the RP of a unit type, the higher the cost to recover it.

- **Cost:** 1 SP per five recovery points used (round up).
- Allows the entity in question to restore CE. Note that advanced units may have additional requirements that must be fulfilled before recovery kicks in (e.g. some may require a certain tech-level to be met).
- Recovering causes the unit to lose some experience points as new recruits fill up the ranks of dead veterans. For mechanical units, this represents the introduction of new parts (and thus machine spirits) into a greater whole, introducing minute changes in its behavior. A unit loses one experience for each 20% CE it recovers.
- Non-Unit entities recover 10% per turn.
- Can be combined with the Move, Brace and Produce activities.

RECOVERY

Table 5.1 provides an overview over the requirements and resource demands of a unit recovering from combat damage.

CHAPTER 5: TABLES

Unit Name	CE	Requirement	RP	Rate
Regular Infantry	any	Minima	0.5	40%
Special Infantry	any	Minima	1	33%
Mechanized	any	Vexillus	1	33%
Armored	any	Vexillus	2	25%
Astartes	≥75%	-	0.5	5%
Astartes	<75%	-	-	0%
Astartes	≥50%	Hold or Fleet	1	40%
Astartes	<50%	Hold or Fleet	-	special ¹
Knight	≥50%	Vexillus or Knight World	1	25%
Knight	<50%	Exactus or Knight World	2	20%
Titan	≥75%	Vexillus	3	15%
Titan	≥50%	Exactus	4	15%
Titan	<50%	Exactus	4 ²	15%
Void Ship	≥75%	-	2	5%
Void Ship	≥75%	Space Port	2	25%
Void Ship	≥50%	Vexillus, Space Port	4	20%
Void Ship	≥25%	Vexillus, Space Port	4 ³	10%
Void Ship	<25%	Exactus	5 ⁴	10%

TABLE 5.1: RECOVERY TABLE BY UNIT TYPE.

Name	Type	Tech Level	Time	Parts
Basic Infantry	Basic	Minima	1	-
Mechanized Infantry	Advanced	Vexillus	3	-
Special Infantry	Advanced	Vexillus	3	-
Pulled Artillery	Advanced	Vexillus	3	-
Leman Russ Hull	Part	Vexillus	2	-
Turret (Basic)	Part	Vexillus	2	-
Turret (Advanced)	Part	Exactus	3	-
Leman Russ Assembly	Assembly	Vexillus	1	Hull, Turret
Astartes Scouts	Advanced	Minima	2	Neophytes
Astartes Wargear	Part	Exactus	4	-
Knight Chassis	Part	Vexillus	1	-
Knight Power Core	Part	Exactus	2	-
Titan Basic Weapon	Part	Vexillus	1	-

¹Needs recruits from the next lower experience level.

²Plus one or more randomly-determined parts depending on the severity of damage suffered.

³Plus one randomly-determined part

⁴Plus two or more randomly-determined parts

Name	Type	Tech Level	Time	Parts
Titan Advanced Weapon	Part	Exactus	2	-
Knight	Assembly	Vexillus	1 per part	Chassis, Core, Weapons
Warhound Chassis	Part	Vexillus	4	-
Warhound Power Core	Part	Exactus	4	-
Warhound	Assembly	Exactus	1 per part	Chassis, Core, Weapons
Warlord Chassis	Part	Vexillus	4	-
Warlord Legs	Part	Vexillus	2	-
Warlord Head	Part	Exactus	4	-
Warlord Power Core	Part	Exactus	6	-
Warlord	Assembly	Exactus	1 per part	Chassis, Core, Legs, Head, Weapons
Ship Hull Section	Part	Vexillus	4	-
Ship Core	Part	Exactus	6	-
Ship Bridge	Part	Exactus	4	-
Ship Engines	Part	Exactus	4	-
Macro cannon Battery	Part	Vexillus	2	-
Lance Battery	Part	Exactus	3	-
Torpedo Tubes	Part	Vexillus	1 per 2 tubes	-
Flight Deck	Part	Vexillus	6	-
Frigate	Assembly	Vexillus	1 per part	Hull, Core Engine Weapons
Cruiser	Assembly	Exactus	1 per part	2xHull, 2xCore Engine Bridge Weapons
Battleship	Assembly	Exactus	1 per part	4xHull, 2xCore 2xEngine Bridge Weapons

TABLE 5.2: UNIT PRODUCTION TABLE.