



It's All In Your Warhead

Updated house missile rules for Epic

By Greg Bak

"Gentlemen, today we will cover unique fire support options available to commanders of most Imperial Guard and Adeptus Mechanicus forces, primarily from Imperial Cruise Missile. These deadly weapons are unique in their long range, accuracy, and wide variety of warhead choices. It is the warhead choices that make these weapons truly unique. For Imperial Cruise Missile are one of the few in which commanders can tailor to meet their combat needs. Whether that need be creating battlefield obstacles, providing cover for your advancing troops, or smashing any enemy war engine to bits.

Gentlemen, you must, however, analysis your mission and the enemy wisely before you make any warhead decisions. For once the warheads are mated to their missile airframes you will likely be stuck with them for the duration of an entire operation."

From the lectures of Commissar Von Fredrick at the Imperial Officers Academy



Imperial Guard Death Strike Missile launcher is one of my favorite units in Epic Armageddon. Yet, unlike most modern missile weapon systems, it is restricted to just one weapon, a Vortex Missile. That is until now. My friends and I have experimented with some house rules that I feel offer more variety to missile of all races. In addition I have include some extra warhead options for artillery units as well. But lets give credit, where credit is due. Most of the rule ideas came from the original Space Marine rules first out in the late 1980's, written by Jervis Johnson. I hope you enjoy these rules as much as my friends and I do.

Before we begin it's important to note that all the special rules below use the standard barrage and orbital barrage size templates (as on page 57 of the published Epic rule book) If a template needs to move randomly then simply use a scatter dice.

CRUISE MISSILE OPTIONS

Imperial Death Strike missiles, and similar missile mounted on Titans, are basically long range cruise missiles fielded by Armies of the Imperium. These weapon are most famous for it Vortex Warhead System, but other variants are available. Some warheads allow player to send out high bursts of electro-magnetic energy, reeking havoc on units electronic systems. Others travel through the warp, only to rematerialize inside an unsuspecting target, usually a war engine. There are even warheads that generate a stasis field freezes time and all unfortunate units trapped within its radius.

But wait, these options are not just for Imperial players. Many other non-Imperial races use similar weapon systems. Chaos Titans often employ cruise missiles due to their imperail roots. Orks also use crude cruise missile with a unique "Grot" guidance system (at the expense of the poor Grot). The Tau and Eldar also

have missile technology. Although Tau and Eldar ground forces generally do not employ cruise missiles, their fortifications and spacecraft do. The epic missile bunker objective makes a perfect cruise missile launcher, adding some difficulty and a new twist to missions that use them as their objective.

For game purposes, a Cruise missile is defined as a one-shot weapon system which normally has a Marco-Weapon effect. When a player selects a formation which contains one or more Cruise Missile launchers the owning player must write down what warhead he wishes the missile to be armed with (or determine randomly for a more realistic and fun game). When the weapon is fired at his target, the warhead type is reveled, and resolved as per the system rules listed below.

Note: Some of the cruise missile warheads as well as artillery options place barrage templates that remain in play for 1 or more turns. Players may opt to make their own templates to represent them and to better remember their effects plus add a cool touch to the battlefield.

VORTEX

When detonated this weapon opens a hole between our universe and the warp. Units to close to this hole are sucked in and forever lost. However, the vortex, as most things associated with the warp, is unstable and unpredictable, and may change locate and grow or shrink in size and intensity.

Rule: Attack with 2d6 BPs, using a barrage template that remains in play and may move, unlimited range, marco-weapon, titan Killer (d3), single-shot, and does not require line of fire (LOF). Do not use the extra template column for vortex missile when determining the effects of the BPs. However if the 2D6 BP dice roll was doubles, the vortex has gone super vortex and now uses the larger orbital barrage template. No unit can ever move into a vortex template (who would really want to). However, units that survive an attack can move out of the effected area (and should if they want to avoid a another attack), treating the area as dangerous terrain as they attempt to leave.



During each end phase the player who placed the Vortex template makes two die rolls. First roll 2D6 to re-determine the new BP strength of the vortex (if already a super vortex, a roll of doubles reverse the process and brings to back to normal size). Next, roll a 1d6 and act as follows: 1-2 the field dissipates and is removed from play; 3-4 the field remains in play and in its current location; 5-6 the field moves 3d6cm in a random direction - rolling to hit any unit it passes over as it moves to its new location. Whether the Vortex moved or not, units under the template are now attacked again (in the end phase).

Designer's Note: This is a big change from the Vortex missile rules used in the Collectors models appendix (page 165). The weapon effects are now more random and chaotic, but such is life if you tamper with the warp. The weapons effectiveness, size, and even movement is very random (other than its initial emplacement), and thus serves as a balancing effect. Further, its "to hit" is lower than most cruise missile systems, and hits infantry / light vehicle more easily than heavy vehicles / war engines. But this is more realistic, as light vehicles and infantry are more likely to be sucked into the warp than their larger and heavier counter parts (with war engines usually just having parts ripped off ... hopefully not the head). The effect of a template remaining in place also creates a new obstacle to the battlefield and can thus channel enemy troops and or deny key terrain (assuming the vortex cooperates). This weapon is truly unpredictable, thus a reason it is general shunned by the Eldar and Tau, used mainly by the Imperium (for firepower) and off course Chaos. However, it adds a lot of excitement and tense moments to the gaming table.

Hobby Note: To represent an in play vortex barrage template I use cotton balls in a tornado swirling motion with blue air brush paint on the cotton balls and base template itself.

SURFACE TO AIR MISSILE (SAM)

This warhead turns your death strike missile into a flak system, but one with unlimited range.

Rule: AA 4+, unlimited range, does not require line of fire (LOF), and slow fire.

Designer's Note: This weapon is a true defensive system often used to protect other Death Strike launchers from those pesky enemy flyers. The SAM is not a one shot weapon which makes this the only cruise missile system with a re-load capability, and thus making enemy aircraft attack SAM positions to remove the threat they pose to them. The one turn "slow fire" delay however gives the system balance in the game, with smart commanders using them in pairs so to reduce the vulnerability during re-loading.

HAYWIRE MISSILE

When this weapon detonates, it creates a tremendous Electro-magnet pulse (EMP) that over loads radios, targeting system, weapons loaders, commutators, and defensive systems.

Rule: Treat as a 1 Barrage Point with Disrupt and Titan Killer (d1) weapon. After the effects of the attack are resolved, leave haywire barrage template in place and treat as a Blind Field, strength of 1. This will cause any unit that moves or fires through the haywire template to receive an additional blast point. The template will be reduced to zero strength during the end phase and thus removed from the game (for more details see blind fields). Single shot weapon, with no LOF required.

Note: At first glance this would look like a rather weak weapon, however it can be a very effective suppressive weapon. The key to the weapons success is its disrupt and titan killer abilities. The disrupt means every unit under the template receives a blast marker even if the haywire does not score a hit. The Titan killing means that this is also the case for war engines, who normally only take blast markers for taking actual damage. This reflects the effective disruption a haywire weapon system can have on the complex electronics and circuits of most war engines (image the war engine bridge with terminals overloading, sparking, and

going down – not good). The weapon is just as effective in breaking infantry and vehicle formations, especially those that tittering close to routing. On the flip side, the haywire is very unlikely to actually hit, let alone kill much, but such is the balance of life.

For Example: if a Haywire cruise missile is fired at a 8 DC War Engine, it would inflict 5 blast points, but how? War engine rolls to hit at _ its starting DC, in this case 4. Since the haywire missile is a disrupt weapon, all 4 to hit rolls *automatically* cause a blast marker. In addition, 1 blast marker is inflicted for being hit by a barrage weapon, for a grand total of 5, ouch! The fact that the Haywire template remains in play until the end of the turn acting like a Blind Field means the target move and or shots knowing it will rack up more blast markers for either action. Perhaps staying put and conducting a Marshall order might be the better course of action. Now that's suppression at its finest.

WARP MISSILE

When fired this weapon activates a small warp drive engineer allowing it to make a warp jump. Although the warp jump is short, lasting only seconds, it allows the weapon system to re-appear inside its target, bypassing shield defenses and any attempts to shot it down.

Rule: MW3+, Ignore Shields and power fields (but not holo fields), Titan Killer (d6), unlimited range, single-shot, no LOF required

Designer Notes: This is a change from the Warp missile rules used in the Collectors models appendix (page 165). I lowered the "to hit" as it is likely very difficult to program a missile to navigate the warp and then reappear inside a pin-point target, one that maybe moving no less. However, if done right, the explosion / materialization in side another structure would cause great damage, so I raised the Titan kill from D3 to D6 to reflect this (which then again balances all out). This weapon was made to kill Titans with or without those pesky Void Shields or Power Fields. It still has good accuracy, avoids shielding defenses and is a titan killer. However, all this is a big over kill if used on a normal vehicle, so save it for the big guys.



STASIS MISSILE

When this weapon detonates it creates a stasis field, which freezes time, and with it, any unit trapped within its field.

Rule: Place a barrage template over your target which remains in play. Any unit under the template is considered in the stasis field (frozen in time) and therefore can not move, shot, rally, be shot at or take place in an assault. The trapped unit(s) formation receives 1 blast markers for each model trapped in the status field due to confusion and horror. However, formations are otherwise unaffected if not under the template. Parent formation may move, shot, assault, route, and be targeted as normal, minus the trapped unit(s). Further the parent formation is not obligated to remain within 5cm of the trapped unit(s) and may move away from them. The trapped unit(s) will remain so until the stasis field dissipates or randomly moves away. Once freed, trapped unit(s) function as normal, and must move to within 5cm of their formation.

During each end phase, the player who placed the Stasis field rolls a 1d6. On a roll of 1-2 the field dissipates and is removed from play, a 3-4 the field remains for another turn, and 5-6 the field moves 3d6 cm in a random direction - freezing in play any unit under the template at its new location. Single shot weapon, with no LOF required.

Designer's Note: An excellent weapon to take a war engine out of the game for several turns allowing you to focus your attention on other targets. Stasis weapons are also excellent at breaking tightly packed infantry formations due to the high number of blast markers they dish out. The effect of this weapon also adds an obstacle to the battlefield thus can channel enemy troops and or deny key terrain (assuming the stasis field cooperates). However, the stasis field is a bit unpredictable, and may move back through your own formations if you get to close. But such is the risks when you mess with father time.

PLASMA

When this warhead detonates a large amount of plasma is spewed over a wide area. Plasma is very effective against penetrating armor and thus causing much destruction on the battlefield.

Rule: Barrage template MW3+, single shot, no LOF required.

Designer's Notes: This weapon is very effect against formations of heavily armored units or stubborn infantry in good cover. Although it does not have the same titan killer lethal effects as a vortex or warp missile, it is a barrage weapon and safer and more predicable then a vortex (i.e. it won't move).

YOU GET WHAT YOU GET

For a bit of realism and random fun, players with a cruise missile launcher should roll a die to determine the warhead each launcher has. Although most players would always rather choose their weapons, this method adds a bit of realism as to what systems may be available at any given battle for any number of reasons. It further serves to balance these rules and adds a another dimension of fun. The own player should therefore roll 1d6 per launcher before the start of the game to determine the warhead as per the chart below.

1. Vortex Missile	Unlimited	2d6 BP, in play barrage template - may move, size of barrage special, single-shot, Marco-weapon, Titan Killer (D3), no LOF required
2. Warp Missile	Unlimited	MW3+, Titan Killer (D6), ignores shields, single-shot, no LOF required
3. SAM	Unlimited	AA4+, Slow fire
4. Haywire Missile	Unlimited	1 BP, Disrupt, Titan Killer (D1), creates blind field s-1, single-shot, no LOF
5. Stasis Missile	Unlimited	In play template - may move, freezes units under template, 1 blast marker per trapped unit, single shot, no LOF required
6. Plasma Missile	Unlimited	MW3+, barrage template, single-shot, no LOF required

MISSILES AS FLYERS

One shot missiles are more like a cruise missile and a bit bigger and slower and the average missile system on the battlefield. This gives your opponent the chance to shot down the in-coming weapon system with his anti-air craft units.

Rule: When firing a cruise strike missile or similar one shot missile (Ork cruise missile, titan missile, Chaos Titan missile, etc) move it as an aircraft during the aerospace phase. The missile is treated as a bomber, except SAMs which are treated like Fighters. All Missiles are on a ground attack action, expect SAMs who are on intercept. Missiles move to make base contact with target. Missiles have an Armor of 6+, however, anti-aircraft are at a -1 "to hit" (do to targets speed and small size).

Designer's Note: This rule gives Cruise Missile opponents another means of balancing off the nasty effects of this system. These rules also give a secondary mission to air defense units, that is to track and destroy enemy missile systems as they do today, so why not in 41K (Think Patriot vs SCUD).

UNIQUE AMMO OPTIONS UPGRADES

Any formation that has a unit with a weapon system that fires barrage points can choose this upgrade (to include aircraft and spacecraft). During a turn in which the weapon would fire the owner may elect to replace the standard high explosive ammo for a unique ammo; scatter mines, blind screen, smoke screens or toxin cloud. Currently, all races can use all types of special ammo. That said, Orks would likely use smoke over blind fields as they are well... simpler. The point cost for having such options are as follows: Smoke Screens: 10 points per formation, Blind Fields: 35 points per formation, Scatter mines: 35 points per formation, and Toxins: 100 points per formation. Note: all four types of special ammo generally require the template(s) to remain in play for 1 or more game turns.

I debated using the formations BPs determine the cost of unique ammo, but in the end opted for straight formation cost for two reasons. 1. This is in keeping with the Epic Armageddon simple point cost system seen in all their army's. 2. This made it more likely that players would find it cost prohibited and ill-logical to buy unique ammo for small formations versus large ones, unless he planned them for a specific mission. This is very realistic, as larger formations are more likely to have greater support and thus ammo available to them. After all, if every formation has unique ammo then, well, its no longer unique.

BLIND SCREEN

When the round detonates it creates a field of smoke, haze, and Electro-magnetic interference which greatly hinder the line of sight for all direct fire weapons systems.

Rule: A blind screen is represented by a barrage template that remains in play unit it dissipates. All units (to include war engines) that move or shot through a Blind Screen receive 1 blast marker. Additionally, any unit that is targeted through a blind screen receives a cover modifier (-1) to hit (but no saving through modifier).

The size of the blind field helps determines its duration on the battlefield. HALF (rounding down) the number of BPs fired to create the blind field determines the field's strength. Record the blind field's strength (you can do so with a die, counter, coins, or just written down on a piece of paper). The maximum strength is 3 (6 BPs). Any formations that use over 6 BPs creates a 2nd field, splitting the total of BPs between them.

During the end phase the player who placed the blind field lowers the strength by one and rolls one die per template to see if the blind field dissipates. If you roll equal to or less then the templates strength, the template remains in play. If you roll great then the template current strength or its strength is zero, the template dissipates and is removed from play.

Designer's Notes: Blind Fields can be a very effective at limiting enemy formations movement and fire, especially if they are easy to break. To balance this out, blind fields require twice as many barrage points to make and are limited to a strength of 3, thus limiting their time frame on the battlefield. This also giving advantages to using smoke screens.

Hobby Note: To represent an in play Blind Field template I use cotton balls smoking up with red air brush paint effect on the cotton balls and base template itself. I further add some small squares of yellow and red transport plastic to represent visual chaffing effects.



SMOKE SCREENS

When the round detonates a field of thick black smoke obscures the battlefield.

Rule: A smoke screen is represented by a barrage template that remains in play, until it dissipates. Any unit that traces its line of fire through a smoke screen grants the target the cover (-1) modifier to hit (but no saving through modifier).

The size of the smoke screen helps determine its duration on the battlefield. The number of BPs fired to create the smoke screen determines the screen's strength. Record the smoke screen's strength (you can do so with a die, counter, coins, or just written down on a piece of paper). The maximum strength is 6. Any formation that uses over 6 BPs creates a 2nd screen, splitting the total of BPs between them.

During the end phase the player who placed the smoke screen lowers the strength by one and rolls one die per template to see if the smoke screen dissipates. If you roll equal to or less than the template's strength, the template remains in play. If you roll greater than the template's current strength or its strength is zero, the template dissipates and is removed from play.

Designer Notes: Smoke Screens have been around through most of the history of warfare and this will continue into the 41K universe. They are cheap and effective, though clearly to a lesser degree than a Blind Field. The use of smoke on the battlefield gives commanders the option to use his weapons to protect his forces rather than always outright try to kill his foe. A wise commander will clearly see the benefits.

Hobby Note: To represent an in-play Smoke screen template I use cotton balls smoking up with black and/or gray air brush paint effect on the cotton balls and base template itself.

SCATTER MINES

When fired this round releases dozens of land mines in air just before hitting the ground. This creates an instant minefield and obstacle on the battlefield.

Rule: Represented by a model or standard barrage template (3 inches diameter). Scatter Mines create an obstacle on the battlefield, placed to limit or channel enemy movement. Any unit type (infantry, vehicle, and war engine) that attempts to move through a minefield must treat the minefield as "Dangerous" terrain. Each causality caused by a minefield will place a blast marker on that formation. Skimmers and Jump Pack infantry are free to move over minefields without having to make a Dangerous terrain die roll, just like they would with other dangerous terrain, as long as they do not end their movement in the minefield.

Designer's Note: Scatter mines may be fired on top of a formation. If this occurs, the unit MUST make a dangerous terrain roll for each unit located in the field moves. This is a nasty tactic and a fairly easy way to pin a formation down.

Scatter Mines follow the exact same rules as Minefields found in the "Assault!" article, by Miles Holmes. The only difference is in the shape of the minefield and the fact that Scatter Mines are employed during the game and not before it. Scatter Mines, as their name entails, will land in a more even area as opposed to a linear formation that engineers would use when building fortifications, which is why a 3 inch template is used as opposed to Miles 10x 2 cm bases.

Hobby Note: To represent scatter mines I use a standard 3 inch template. Add a skull sigh, and perhaps a small crater, and you've got a minefield. I template version work good, their just not as attractive.

Tox

Often known as Chemical weapons, Stikk Bomms to Orks, Poison Spore mines to Tyranids, and Nurgle's blessing to

followers of Chaos, toxins are poisons gases that kill units. The gases can move through cracks and follow the ground low into trenches and foxholes, thus avoiding most forms of fortifications.

Further, these chemicals often linger on the battlefield, unless dispersed by winds, which sometimes blow them into a different direction, so don't get too close. Often toxins are worse than their bite, especially since most army's carrier respirators or vehicles with filters, and thus act equally as a terror weapon and terrain denial weapon.

Rule: Barrage points work as normal. However, the toxin cloud gains the ignore cover and disrupt ability. In addition, the cloud will likely remain in play for the rest of the turn, if not several.

The strength of the toxin cloud determines its duration on the battlefield. HALF (rounding down) the number of BPs fired to create the toxin cloud determines the cloud's strength points. Record the Toxin cloud's strength points (you can do so with a die, counter, coins, or just written down on a piece of paper). The maximum strength points of a toxin cloud is 3 (6 BPs). Any formation that uses over 6 BPs creates a 2nd field, splitting the total of BPs between them. A template can have only 1 BP, thus 0 strength points. Any template with 0 strength points DOES NOT remain in play and is removed after all hit rolls are completed.

During the end phase the player who placed the toxin cloud lowers the strength by one and rolls one die per template to see if the toxin cloud dissipates. If you roll equal to or less than the template's strength, the template remains in play. If you roll greater than the template's current strength or its strength is zero, the template dissipates and is removed from play.

Designer Notes: Chemical weapons have played a big role in warfare during the 20-21st centuries and will continue to do so in the 40K universe. However, the horror and general tendency to avoid using these weapons has carried on through time. Imperial forces only seem to use toxins to increase the firepower of weaker forces, almost always by the Imperial Guard. Orks, Chaos, and Tyranids see it as a normal weapon and part of warfare. While the Eldar, Tau, and Human Space Marines seem to shun them, but wear protective masks to defend against their effects. What's unknown is the Necron views. One would assume with their robotic and non-respiratory features these weapons would be ideal. However, it has been suggested that some of the toxic chemicals burn away at their delicate internal circuits. Currently with the Necron, all this remains theory until more data can be found. In any event, toxic weapons remain a part of the 40K universe battlefield.

Hobby Note: To represent an in-play toxin cloud template I use cotton balls smoking up with green and/or yellow air brush paint effect on the cotton balls and base template itself.

PLACING ADDITIONAL BARRAGE TEMPLATES

Even in today's day of precision ammunition, many rounds go astray, especially when dealing with the difficulties of indirect fire. To reflect this, when a formation using barrage point weapons uses a 2nd and 3rd template to attack one formation he must roll to randomly determine where they will be placed.

OPTIONAL RULE

This is a modification (expansion) to rule 1.9.8. Use the barrage template numbered 1 to 6 on the side with arrows. Place this 1st barrage template on the desired target within the weapons range as normal. Roll one D6 for each additional barrage template being placed. Place additional barrage templates touching the 1st template next to the number roll for each. If while placing a 3rd template you roll the same location as the 2nd, roll again until you get a different location.

Well there you have it. I hope you enjoy these rules as much as my friends and I do.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Greg Bak first began playing war games at the age of 12 and never stopped. Greg didn't get involved in Epic until his senior year of college, back in the days of the Horus Heresy when Epic 40K was simply called "Space Marine."