



DEATH FROM THE SKIES!

*Combining Battlefleet Gothic games with
Epic 40K and WH40K games, by Gav Thorpe*



Gav Thorpe

Everybody loves campaigns. Just imagine playing a massive game that started with the arrival of your forces in a star system and ended with a ground assault on a rebel stronghold or an Ork lair! Well, Gav has been busy thinking up some neat ways to tie together a Battlefleet Gothic campaign with either a Warhammer 40,000 or an Epic 40,000 campaign.

With the long-awaited arrival of Battlefleet Gothic, a whole new dimension is available for players of Epic and 40K campaigns – space! For years we've enjoyed battling over cities and continents, and now we can wage war for the possession of star systems or whole sub-sectors. Fighting spaceship battles is good fun. Fighting ground battles is equally entertaining. Fighting a combined army and fleet action? It's gotta be a winner!

PLANETARY ASSAULTS

There are several ways for squashing together your Epic and 40K games with Gothic battles, from one-off games to massive sector-spanning campaigns. By far the most obvious and highly appealing option is to stage a full planetary assault, using Battlefleet Gothic to land troops on

the planet and then fight WH40K and/or Epic 40K battles to decide the land war. There are two ways of approaching the combined planetary assault campaign: sequentially and simultaneously.

Sequential Planetary Assaults

When playing sequentially, you fight the Gothic Planetary Assault scenario to its conclusion and then, depending on how well the attacker fares, you play a game (or games) of either WH40K or Epic 40K. As noted in the Planetary Assault scenario, every assault point scored by the attacker is worth 2,000 points in WH40K and 400 points in Epic 40K, but how exactly can you use that to work out your planetary landing?

Epic 40,000

For Epic battles things are relatively straightforward, simply play the Epic 40,000 Planetary Assault scenario, with the attacker having the appropriate points value. As an alternative, the attacker can trade one assault point's worth of units for D3 orbital barrages (roll a D3 on the turn you want to use the barrage, this is the number you can make that turn). These orbital barrages are worked out just like the Fate card of the same name. For example, a Chaos player manages to score a respectable 7 assault points in the space battle. This gives him a total of 2,800 points of units. However, he opts to use five of his points on troops to field a 2,000 point army and use the last two for two salvos of D3 orbital barrages.

So far so good, but how many points does the defender have? Looking at



the results table in the Gothic Planetary Assault scenario we see that 5-6 assault points is considered to be roughly average. This translates into 2,000-2,400 points in Epic so we can say that the defender gets 2,000 points (equal to a minimum marginal win for the defender). Alternatively, the defender's points value can be modified by the type of world being assaulted (see page 140 of Battlefleet Gothic for a table to generate a random world type). The defender starts with a base value of 2,000 points, modified as follows:

World Type	Defender's Points Total
Forge World	+(D6+3)x100
Hive World	+(D6+2)x100
Civilised World	+(D6+1)x100
Uninhabited	-(D6+3)x100
Agri-world	+D3x100
Mining World	+D6x100
Penal Colony	-D6x100

Warhammer 40,000

Things are a little more complicated for 40K games, because each assault point is worth a whole army. Play the game of Gothic as normal; each assault point scored by the attacker represents an army dropped to the surface. Each army fights one 40K battle when it lands and the attacker must win a certain number of battles to ensure a successful overall landing. The more armies the attacker has, the more bites at the cherry he gets – winning 5 out of 10 battles is easier than winning 5 out of 5! The Planetfall scenario in Codex Space

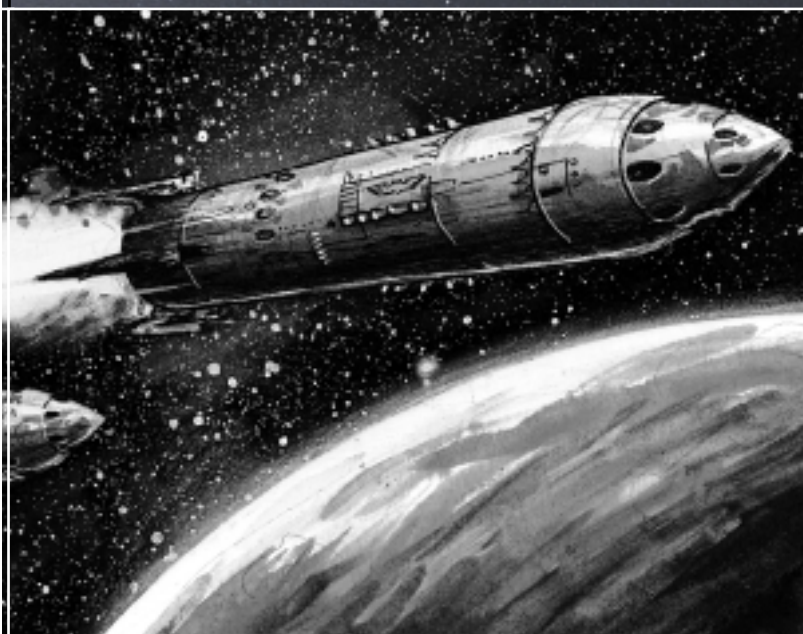
CAMPAIGN RESULTS CHART

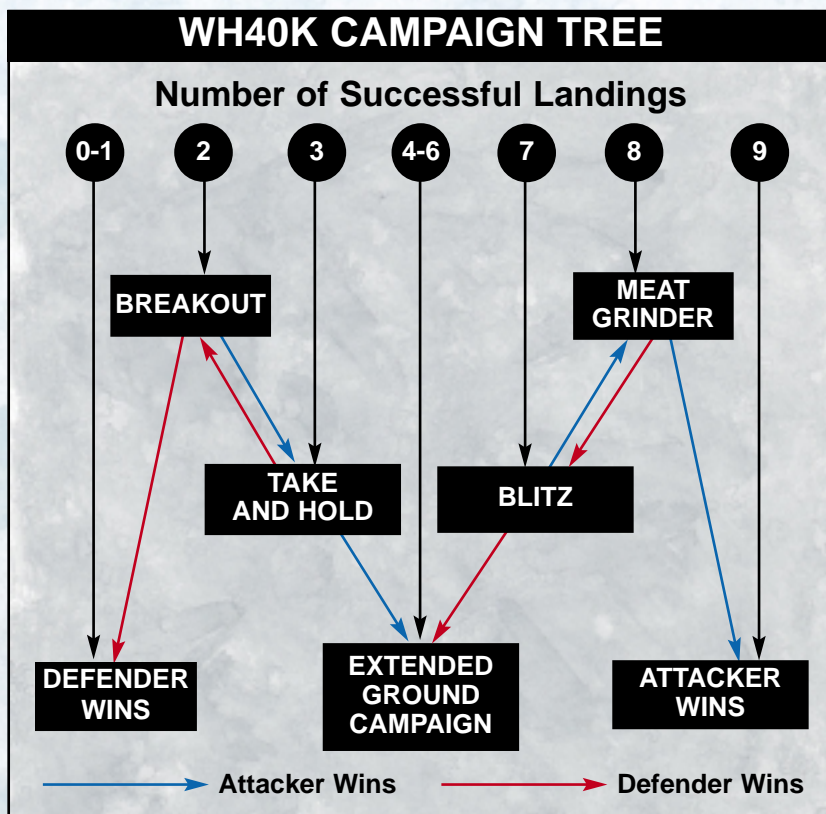
Wins	Result
0-1	Annihilated! Your forces barely make an impact on the planet's defenders and are swiftly wiped out.
2	Decimated! Your armies do little to trouble the defenders, who soon mass to destroy your meagre force. Play the Breakout scenario as the attacker to see what happens, if you win then your score goes up to 3, if you lose your score goes down to 1.
3	Defeated. You fought valiantly but the small amount of ground you managed to capture will do little to damage the enemy's grip on this world. You must gain more territory. Play a Take and Hold as the attacker, if you can win then your score goes up to 4 wins in total, if you lose then your score goes down to 2.
4-6	Extended Ground Campaign. You manage to get a fair amount of troops and war engines to the surface intact, but the world's fate will only be resolved through a protracted campaign. A simple campaign system is to play games as normal, but keep track of each player's win/loss ratio. Once a player achieves a 75% win rate or better, they gain control of the world – you should play a minimum of 4 or 5 games though, otherwise the person who wins the first battle gets a 100% record and wins immediately!
7	Landed in Strength. The enemy suffered some heavy losses during your attack and you must press home the advantage you have. Play a Blitz mission as the attacker. If you win your victories go up to 8, if you lose they go down to 6.
8	Overpowering Numbers! You land massive forces all around the enemy positions, taking vital strategic points and disrupting the enemy's lines of communication and supply. Now is the time to finish them off! Play the Meat Grinder mission as the attacker. If you win your victory total goes up to 9, if you lose it drops to 7.
9+	Total Victory! The enemy were completely smashed during your initial assault, many were killed and thousands surrendered, surrounded by your assault forces. The planetary government quickly bows to your demands and your control is assured.

Marines is a good basis for a dropzone battle (units which cannot

deploy from drop pods enter from a random table edge when they arrive from reserve – see the battle report in WD231 for an example). Alternatively you could fight Recon, Blitz, Night Fight, Take and Hold, Patrol or Bunker Assault missions. Keep track of the total number of battles won by the attacker and then refer to the Campaign Results chart above to see how the landing went.

As you will see, it is possible to slide back and forth, with the attackers trying to launch an offensive while the defenders muster a counter-attack. You can move several places up and down the chart, so that a worthy campaign may well be salvaged from a poor landing, and vice versa. This is shown more clearly on the campaign tree over the page.





Orbital Bombardments in 40K

Just as with Epic, you can trade assault points for orbital bombardments instead of armies. You must decide exactly how many assault points represent armies and how many are bombardments before fighting any battles (for example, if you score 6 assault points, you could say that they represent 4 armies and two orbital barrages). There are two types of orbital bombardment in Warhammer 40,000 – pinpoint and saturation, and both are resolved in one of your own shooting phases, no more than one bombardment per battle. A pinpoint barrage is represented by an earthshaker cannon shot. Place the ordnance template anywhere on the table and scatter it D6" to determine the bombardment's final position. A saturation bombardment uses the rules for preliminary bombardments given in the scenario special rules. However, a saturation bombardment is worked out in one of your shooting phases rather than before the game, and effects all eligible units on the tabletop, including your own (i.e. roll a dice for every unit on the table, on a 6 they are affected). This is basically the system that we used at the recent Taneloth campaign

event, where a huge WH40K campaign was being waged in the exhibition hall here at Games Workshop HQ while all Games Workshop stores took part in a closely fought Battlefleet Gothic campaign.

Simultaneous Planetary Assaults

When played simultaneously, the ground fighting and space battle take place at the same time – you play a turn of Gothic and then play a turn of Epic, with forces being landed, orbital bombardments and so forth depending upon the situation amongst the stars. Whereas in a sequential assault you fight several games in succession, in the simultaneous assault you play more than one game at once. The simultaneous assault works better for games of Epic 40,000, but it's quite easy to devise a system for fighting simultaneous games of 40K.

Put simply, for every turn of Battlefleet Gothic you play, you play one turn of Epic 40,000 too. Before the game starts, each player must pick their Epic 40,000 army and their Gothic fleet. The size of the Epic army depends on how big the attacking fleet is – for every transport in the

fleet, 800 points of forces may be transported. For example, if you were playing a 1,500 point Gothic battle, that would be 6 transports which would hold 4,800 points of Epic units. The defender gets either 2,000 points or a random amount determined by the planet type, using the method described earlier. The attacker's detachments must be assigned to specific transports ('12th Necromundan Hellhammers in the green transport', for example). If you are using heavy transports (details given elsewhere in this article) then each one may carry 1,600 points of detachments instead. Only heavy transports may carry war engine detachments.

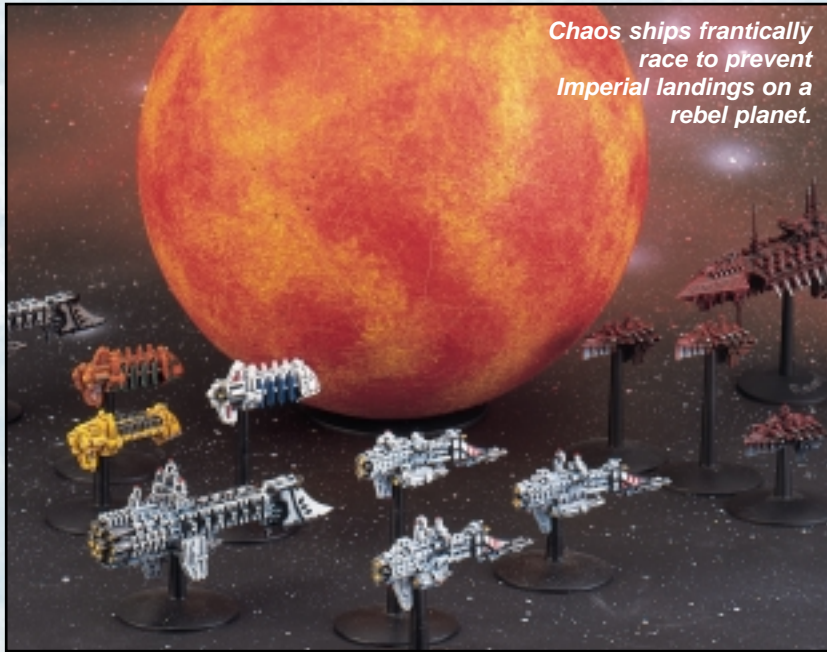
The defender sets up his ground forces and defending fleet, then the battle begins. Play the Battlefleet Gothic game until the attacker scores his first 'assault' points. From then on, play a turn of Epic 40,000 after finishing every turn of Battlefleet Gothic. Rather than scoring abstract 'assault' points, the attacker may land detachments and perform planetary bombardments. If a transport gets into a position where it can score assault points, the detachments it is carrying will arrive on the Epic battlefield that turn, moving on from the attacker's primary landing zone. When a transport has deployed its detachments, it makes planetary bombardments but may only make one bombardment per turn (ignore the fact that it usually scores two 'assault' points per turn). If a capital ship (or empty transport) scores an assault point then the attacking player can make an orbital barrage that turn, using the rules given on the Fate card of the same name.

So the first Epic turn will either consist of orbital bombardments against hidden defending troops, or the first detachments landed coming on to the table (again, possibly with orbital bombardments to support them).

Other than this, both battles are fought using the normal rules, and the overall victor is the side which wins the Epic 40,000 game.

Example: An Ork force is launching a planetary assault. The players start their game of Battlefleet Gothic and in the sixth turn there are two Kill kroozers and a transport within low





Chaos ships frantically race to prevent Imperial landings on a rebel planet.

orbit in a position to attack the ground. The players then play their first turn of Epic 40,000, with two extra orbital barrages for the Orks that turn (from the Kill kroozers) and the detachment carried by the transport moving on from the Orks' table edge in the movement phase. In the next turn one of the kroozers moves out of attack range but is replaced by another transport. In the second Epic turn the Orks' still have two extra orbital barrages (one from the remaining Kill kroozer, one from the first transport) and the newly arrived transport can deploy its detachments to the surface. Both games continue like this until the Epic 40,000 game is won.

You can use this system for sequential games as well, with armies or detachments being deployed by transports and orbital barrages being scored by capital ships – rather than being given a free choice on what each assault point represents.

Fliers

The defender will have a network of airfields across the planet and so his fliers will go through the normal 'repair, re-arm, ready' cycle. The attacker on the other hand has yet to establish any air bases so a different approach is needed when dealing with fliers in the attacker's army. My suggestion is to use the Gothic ordnance counters as equivalents to

Epic aircraft. Any fighter or bomber markers that move onto the planet's edge of the low orbit table become a squadron of five interceptors or three bombers respectively (Ork Fighta-Bommerz count as interceptors for purposes of this rule). Once these aircraft have completed their mission they are removed.

This is the most logical way to work fliers for the attacking force, after all if a naval action is supporting a ground assault, it seems only reasonable to assume that the navy would also be

providing air support. However as an alternative you can simply choose fliers as a detachment of your Epic 40K army in the normal way and these will be assumed to include pre-fabricated temporary air base facilities and so will use the standard Epic 40K rules for fliers. Note that you cannot use both options for the attacker's fliers, it's one or the other!

Space Marines

Space Marine battle barges and strike cruisers excel at planetary assaults, so to cover this apply the following rules. A Space Marine fleet does not include any transports, instead each battle barge carries three detachments and each strike cruiser carries one detachment. These detachments are not limited in points value.

Space Marine detachments deployed to the surface can either use drop pods or Thunderhawks. Detachments which could normally be carried in drop pods will be deployed using drop pods (see the Epic Battles Book and Army of the Imperium detachment list). Any other detachments are taken to the surface by Thunderhawk detachments on Transport missions. These Thunderhawks do not have to be paid for and the spaceship carries enough Thunderhawks to deploy all of its forces in one turn. For deploying Rhinos, Land Raiders and so forth from Thunderhawks, have a



BATTLEFLEET
GOTHIC™

look at the additional flyer rules in Epic Firepower (first published in White Dwarf 214). Of course, you will need appropriate models, which could be quite a few Thunderhawks. If you have insufficient Thunderhawk models to transport a detachment then the detachment will move on from your primary landing zone as normal (it is assumed that they have landed slightly away from the main dropzone). Any Thunderhawk markers that move onto the planet's surface from low orbit count as 3-strong Thunderhawk detachments which can then perform an intercept or ground attack mission that turn. Once their mission is complete they will be removed.

LONGER CAMPAIGNS

If you really want to go to town, there's no need to limit yourself to just fighting the planetary assault. For example, you could fight an extended campaign from when the fleet actually enters the system. Perhaps the system is blockaded, so you must fight a Blockade Run to request reinforcements. If successful the reinforcements arrive and must fight an Escalating Engagement to raise the blockade. Once the blockade is raised, you could do a small-scale Surprise Attack to try to clear out the planetary defences and any nearby ships. The transports must be escorted to the planet, using the Convoy scenario. Any transports that

survive the Convoy can then be used in the Planetary Assault itself, while the number of defending ships will be affected by the earlier attacks. If the Planetary Assault fails it may be decided that Exterminatus is the only option left. In this way you can play several Gothic battles followed by a series of Epic and/or 40K battles to decide the fate of the system.

Well, that's it from me, ta ta for now...



IMPERIAL HEAVY TRANSPORT pts: special

TYPE/HITS	SPEED	URNS	SHIELDS	ARMOUR	TURRETS
Cruiser/6	15cm	45°	2	5+	2
ARMAMENT		RANGE/SPEED		FIREPOWER/STR	
Port weapons battery		15cm		3	
Starboard weapons battery		15cm		3	
Dorsal weapons battery		15cm		2	
				Left/front/right	

Not all merchant ships fall into the standard 'small transport' category. Some of the larger trading galleons and ore carracks approach the size of warships, though most commonly these accompany Rogue Trader fleets exploring beyond known space or ply the major trading routes of Segmentum Solar. Most famed of all heavy transport vessels is the *Santissima Terra*, which accompanied the fleet of Rogue Trader Lukurius Vanlessa into the eastern fringes late in the 39th Millennium. Long delays by warp storms and alien action (as well as the inevitable time distortions caused by warp travel), meant that the *Santissima Terra* and its attendant escorts did not return to Imperial space for over four centuries.

The ship which returned was virtually unrecognisable as that which had left. Whilst separated from the rest of the fleet, her captain, Inigo Portfell, had discovered a volcanic death world of incomparable riches, so blessed with precious metals and gems that even after refinement by shipboard factories they filled the holds to overflowing. In an effort to carry away as much wealth as possible before the warp storms closed in once more, Captain Portfell resorted to cladding the outer hull of his ship with solid gold. Every arch and buttress of the *Santissima Terra* glittered with the lustre of pure gold and it is said that none who gazed upon her could avoid feeling the stir of avarice in their heart. The wily captain had the good sense to proceed directly to Terra with his

prize and after an eventful journey, pursued by every pirate and corsair within a thousand light years, he presented the ship to his guild house. Through great endeavours the ship was landed and now forms part of the Paternoal palaces on Terra.

Note to Players: During early playtesting for Battlefleet Gothic, the transports used in Convoys and Planetary Assaults were much bigger ships, for which we used old Spacefleet models with the stats above. If you want to use heavy transports just swap two ordinary transports for each heavy transport. You can convert heavy transports from old Spacefleet models (available from Games Workshop Mail Order) or for the more ambitious, you can scratch-build them using the standard Imperial transports as a guide.

Note also that although the ship is described as an Imperial heavy transport, other fleets make use of similar vessels, so they may also be used in Chaos, Ork and Eldar fleets.

