

Brent's Epic 40,000 House Rules

This document details my house rules for playing Epic 40k. I liked the way most of these rules work, but I must admit I haven't had a chance to play test all them thoroughly.

You'll see a lot of my gripes with Epic 40k below. I should say that while I have some gripes with the system, in general I like the game. These rules are just improvements to an already good game.

Force Structure

I had two major gripes with the existing Epic 40k system of detachments. First, they result in a real hodgepodge of unit types, very unlike the structure of current armies. Second, you had to give the same order to the entire detachment. For example, it always seemed I wanted to assault with the Terminators while I wanted to Overwatch with the Land Raiders.

My solution to the first issue was to use the Company Based Army Lists found elsewhere on this site. The rest of this document assumes you are using these lists (otherwise things can get very messy).

My answer to the second problem involves treating each platoon as a separate detachment. Each of the armies has a unit that corresponds to a platoon. They are called platoons, detachments, big mobs, or broods, depending on the army. Under this new system each of these platoons receives its own orders, moves, shoots, assaults, firefights, and receives blast markers as a separate unit. The commander is also considered to be a separate detachment. This arrangement allows one platoon of a company to have Overwatch orders while the another platoon Marches to the next position. (Note: This can mean you will have a lot of orders and you may not have enough Order dice. I found that the old Epic Order counters are great for this purpose.)

Each stand or vehicle within a platoon must be within 2"/5cm of the next unit in the platoon (measured from edge to edge of the stands/vehicles). At least one stand/vehicle of each platoon must stay within 18"/45cm of the commander. These distances seem to be a good balance between unnecessarily bunching up companies and having a company spread across the entire board. As with the original rules, any stand or vehicle that is beyond these distances is considered to be Out of Command with the normal penalties.

Transport vehicles require a special note. Some transport vehicles are part of a platoon, like the Rhinos assigned to a Space Marine platoon. Other times infantry will use a transport that it not part of their platoon. An example might be Genestealers riding on an Assault Spawn. In the later case the Genestealers and Assault Spawn are considered completely separate platoons and receive separate orders, blast markers, etc. In the first case the Rhinos are part of the platoon, but have two special rules. First, the Rhinos can be 6"/15cm from the rest of the platoon (but all of the Rhino must then be within 2"/5cm of each other). This allows the troop to advance while the vehicles hang back. Secondly the Rhinos can be given separate orders than the rest of the platoon. This allows them to lay supporting fire for assaulting troops.

At this point you may be asking yourself how do I target enemy units since they are all broken up into separate platoons. For the most part you use the existing rules regarding the targeting multiple detachments. Divide up your firepower amongst the platoons and resolve each platoon separately. Thus, if you have 12 firepower and are facing two platoons you can divide the firepower 6 and 6, 2 and 10 or any combination you desire. The only additional constraint is that you must fire at the closest platoons first, allocating at least one firepower (or shot from a super heavy weapon) at a closer platoon before going on to fire at the next platoon.

Transporting Units

Another of my gripes is the rules for transporting of troops. In the current rules Space Marines can spend their entire turn riding in the back of a Rhino (less 2"/10cm) and then leap out and run for what is affectively another full turn (less 2"/10cm). My problem with this is that if they spent the entire turn in the Rhino, there was no time to start running afterwards. This also results in unbelievable distances that can be covered in a short time. On a road during a march, Spaces Marines can travel 36"/90cm in the Rhino, plus 12"/30cm once outside for a total of 48"/120cm in one turn. What's worse is the Orks, who should be able to go further since they are just riding on top, can't move after Hitching a Lift, and are unfairly penalized when compared with the other races.

To make transports fairer I use the following rules. Troops can mount or dismount a transport at the beginning or end of a turn. It takes half of Speed of both the troops and transport vehicle to mount or dismount (the vehicle has to stop and the hydraulic doors have to opened/closed). Orks and Tyranids are only lose one quarter of their Speed because they are just jumping onboard or off of the vehicle (but the vehicle still has to slow down and the troops have to scramble on or off). When considering how far troops can move after dismounting, look at how much of the turn was spent in the transport. If the Rhino took half of its turn driving and the other half dismounting, the Space Marines will not have any time to move and should be placed next to the Rhino. This means that Space Marines in a Rhino on a road could march 24"/60 cm in the Rhino (Half Speed of 6" + 2" road * 3 for marching) and then get out. They would be next to the Rhino at the end of the turn. Alternately they could spend the entire turn in the Rhino and go 42"/105 cm (Full Speed of 12" + 2" road * 3 for marching), but still be in the Rhino and need to dismount next turn.

Modified Turn Sequence

I prefer the alternating back and forth action of some other game systems. It often seems unfair to be ready to do some major damage to the enemy and instead watch helplessly as I'm wiped out by enemy fire without any response simply because I lost the initiative.

My revised Sequence of Play is:

1. Movement Phase
 - Declare flyer missions
 - Determine initiative
 - Alternate movement
2. Shooting Phase
 - Simultaneous shooting
3. Assault Phase
 - Determine initiative
 - Alternate assault movements
 - Resolve assaults
 - Resolve firefights
4. Rally Phase
 - Roll to remove blast markers
 - Roll to rally broken detachments
 - Repair war engine damage and shields
 - Check victory conditions

Movement Phase:

The first change is that the players alternate moving platoons. The player that won initiative may move first or require that the opponent moves first. Once this person moves a platoon the other player moves a

platoon. This goes back and forth until all of the platoons are moved. I find this method much more interesting.

You may be saying to yourself that this method encourages players to get the most platoons possible, so that you have more than your opponent and can move those key units after your opponent is done moving their platoons. While this is true, a large number of platoons means each one is weaker and more likely to be broken or eliminated in combat. So, there is a real downside to this approach. In addition, the Company Based Army Lists dictate the size of each platoon, so this shouldn't become much of an issue.

Shooting Phase:

All shooting is considered to be simultaneous. Either side can begin resolving shooting. Whenever a stand or infantry is killed, roll it onto its side or back instead of removing it. This stand/vehicle still has a chance to shoot back and fires with the other units in the platoon. Once the Shooting Phase is complete the rolled over units are removed. It doesn't matter who shoots first because all units get to fire before being removed as casualties. Note that war machines fire at the same time as all other units (see below for more war machine changes).

Assault Phase:

As with the Movement phase assault movements are done on an alternating basis. The resolution of the assault is not done until all the platoons have moved. This is largely done to allow the many platoons to get into position. Assaults with multiple platoons are resolved per the original rules resolving assaults with multiple detachments.

Firefights are resolved after all assaults are resolved. Treat firefights involving multiple platoons as per the rules for firefights with multiple detachments.

War Engines

The original rules have war engines working considerably differently than the rest of the vehicles. Some of these changes are very understandable (multiple points of damage, catastrophic damage, etc.). Other changes don't add much and seem to make the game more confusing (separate shooting phases, lack of orders, etc). There is also Adeptus Titanticus II, but while the game is interesting, it is far too complex for normal Epic games. Instead I use a modified version of the original rules.

In these rules, war engines move and shoot just like any other type of unit. They shoot at the same time as other units. They are given orders just like other units. They take blast markers just like another units. They can turn like other units (that is unlimited turning). The war engines still use the firing arcs listed in the book, still have multiple damage points, and can still suffer catastrophic damage.

The orders for war engines work just like infantry and vehicles. War machines on Overwatch can move 2"/5cm and reroll any misses. When marching they can't fire, but can move 3x their Speed. On assault they fire with half their firepower (and need to roll 4+ to fire each super heavy weapon) and get an additional move in the assault phase.

Blast Markers and Super Heavy Weapons

Super Heavy Weapons seem to be unfairly penalized by blast markers in Epic 40k. As an example, picture three Baneblades and three Shadowswords. Each group has three blast markers. When firing at a targets beyond the range of the secondary Sponson Turrets, the Baneblades will still be able to lay down 21 firepower, which is 2/3 Baneblades worth of firepower. The Shadow Swords, on the other hand, will be unable to fire at all. This is because each Volcano Cannon only counts as 1 Firepower. While the tactics articles talk about pairing up such vehicles with heavy firepower vehicles to counteract this affect, this is just a workaround to the problem.

To resolve the problem with change the Firepower values of Super Heavy Weapons. Antitank weapons count as 2 Firepower. All other Super Heavy Weapons count as 4 Firepower. Any difference between the firepower of a weapon and the blast markers inflicted on that vehicle are worked out as a percentage chance to fire. In the case of a vehicle with a Super Heavy Weapon that has 1 blast marker, it would have a 75% chance to fire the weapon.

Thus in the scenario above, two Shadowswords would be able to fire without a problem and the third would have a 25% chance of firing.

Well, that the end of my house rules for now. If you have any comments or further improvements, I'd love to hear them.