

# The Negotiator

By Phil Kelly

The Tau are the youngest and arguably most vibrant race in the Warhammer 40,000 universe, united in their beliefs and with an understanding of technology that far surpasses that of Humanity. The element-based castes of the Tau race, each specialising in certain spheres from diplomacy to outright war, work together in harmony to pursue the Greater Good. The Water Caste are consummate diplomats, manipulators and fences, able to procure a rare plasma weapon for a handful of Kroot toenail clippings or talk a drug-crazed mutant into quiet subservience before convincing it to savagely assault its former master.

## THE TAU CASTES

The Tau empire is expanding at an incredible rate, the entire race working together to secure their continued success, and they believe their destiny is to spread their influence across the stars. But it was not always this way. The Tau race was once consumed by a bitter civil war that all but destroyed them. When the race was young, the four castes of the Tau developed as separate branches of the same species. The Air Caste dwelt in the lofty mountain ranges of T'au, the race's home planet, using their membranous patagia to soar aloft on thermals. The Earth caste constructed dwellings and settlements on the plains, exhibiting a natural flair for creation and the application of science. The

Fire Caste, aggressive and hot-blooded, simply took by force what they could not otherwise obtain. But most advanced of all were those Tau who realised long before the Tau race began to tear itself apart that it would profit most of all from unity. They worked hard to ensure that what one tribe could not produce, another could supply, and specialised as traders, arbitrators and negotiators between the tribes. They were the Water Caste, but their philosophy was ahead of its time, and great strife was to befall the Tau race before their true value became clear.

It was the Ethereal Caste that pioneered the notion of the Greater Good, that it was honourable and right for a Tau to put his self-interests and even survival aside for the betterment of the race as a whole. Needless to say, being so effortlessly surpassed in their own field forced the Water Caste to swallow a considerable amount of pride, especially as the harmony the Ethereals preached had been the Water Caste's manifesto from the beginning (albeit for less altruistic motives). Although the head councils of the Water caste knew they could only benefit from the status quo imposed by the Ethereals, it took rather longer for them to learn to revere the Ethereals than the rest of their race. In the present day, they are as much a part of the harmony of the Tau as any other caste.

## WHY USE A WATER CASTE TAU IN INQUISITOR...

By now you're more than likely asking why you should include a Tau of the Water Caste in your games of Inquisitor. After all, he's not from the Warrior caste, so he won't be able to use all that funky Tau weaponry, so he won't be the most useful member of the warband on the tabletop, right? Wrong. A skilled Water Caste envoy is a consummate manipulator and can accomplish what it would take a cadre of Fire Warriors to achieve in a fraction of the time and with a minimum of bloodshed. For this reason they exist at the vanguard of the expansionist Tau empire. As all Inquisitor players should know full well, it's a very big mistake to judge a book by its cover.

## ...AS A PLAYER?

The Tau Water Caste envoy is not for the type of player who is used to charging their pet Space Marine full pelt into combat. The nature of the Water Caste means they are a lot more subtle and excel in areas that other characters virtually ignore. The skills that the Water Caste train in revolve around the criminally underused Sagacity characteristic, and each and every one of the Water Caste has this trait in spades. After all, that's their genetic predisposition and their job. However, you can bet your gizmo that your mate's psychopathic regenerating mutant from hell has only ever used a book when short of toilet

paper, and with a successful use of the new Persuade skill the Water Caste can run rings around him (provided he can stay out of arm's reach long enough, that is) and may even end up with the bad guy fighting for him rather than against him.

#### ...AS A GM?

The Tau Water Caste are excellent characters to use as non-player characters (NPCs). They can act as the player characters' employers, setting objectives and missions. They

can be a liability that the characters must protect in-game in order for the Tau to use his unique abilities and connections to get them what they need. They can be rescued to ensure a lasting state of peace with the encroaching Tau empire. They can be the target of an assassination attempt that the PCs must prevent, or even the object of an assassination mission with the information held in the Tau's holographic projector too important to

reach the light of day. The possibilities really are endless, and a GM will quickly find that the Water Caste have a reason to be practically anywhere, for a multitude of reasons, on both sides of the law. Besides, having an NPC who is not armed to the teeth is always good for the realism of your campaign; not everyone is a gun-toting maniac in the 40K universe.

Almost everyone, but not quite.

### TAU WATER CASTE CHARACTERS

**Equipment:** Water Caste envoys almost always wear robes of office (2 armour on all locations except head), and may carry a gizmo (see later) and/or have an escort drone with them (see rules below). Tau Water Caste may also have practically any item of equipment up to and including legendary items, but will not use the items themselves or loan them out unless there really is no other alternative; they are for trade, not for use in battle.

**Special Abilities:** The Tau Water Caste will always have the special abilities Blunt and Persuade. They are also likely to have one or more of the following skills: *Tutor, Mentor, Leader, Force of Will.*

|                    | WS      | BS      | S      | T       | I       | Wp      | Sg     | Nv      | Ld      |
|--------------------|---------|---------|--------|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|---------|
| <b>Water Caste</b> | 20      | 35      | 45     | 45      | 55      | 75      | 85     | 60      | 85      |
| <b>Random</b>      | 10+2D10 | 25+2D10 | 40+2D6 | 40+2D10 | 45+2D10 | 60+3D10 | 70+2D6 | 45+2D10 | 70+2D10 |

### TAU ESCORT DRONES

The Tau Water Caste are often accompanied by small drones that incorporate both defensive and offensive capabilities, albeit minor ones. These drones are nimble and compact, propelled by small but efficient anti-grav units, and are similar in design to the larger drones used by the Tau in battle. They act not only as protectors for their masters, but also as tools of their trade; escort drones can be programmed to record and deliver complex messages, guide prospective clients to the Water Caste envoy, and record every exchange that takes place for later dissection and study so that future transactions can be better tailored to the individual in question.

Tau Escort Drones follow the rules for Servo-skulls, with the following exceptions:

- Escort drones generate D6+2 forcefield protection for both themselves and their masters whilst still active.
- Escort drones are fitted with simple projector arrays that can display information onto a flat screen. With typical Tau ingenuity, these also incorporate twin pulse-pistols (in fact this takes up 90% of the projector array's bulk!). The Escort Drone has a BS of 50. The pulse-pistols have the following profile:

|               | Type   | Range | Mode   | Acc | Dam | Shots | Rld |
|---------------|--------|-------|--------|-----|-----|-------|-----|
| Pulse-pistols | Pistol | E     | semi 2 | —   | 2D6 | 10    | 1   |

## THE GIZMO

After looking at the weird object that the Tau Water Caste Envoy is holding, you're probably wondering what it is and what it can do. Well, that's simple. It's a gizmo, and there are several possibilities as to why the Water Caste Envoy has it with him. At the beginning of each game, randomly determine what function the gizmo has on the chart below. Alternatively, let the GM decide on your behalf; if this option is chosen, the gizmo will have two functions instead of just one (however it can only be used to perform one function in any given turn). Of course, there's no reason why your Water Caste envoy can't try and convince the other characters that it's capable of one of the other options as well...

### 1. "He's Holding a Thermal Detonator!"

The gizmo that the Envoy has had tucked away under his robes is an Apocalypse grenade, an immensely powerful explosive device capable of levelling an entire city block. Or at least that's what he tells the hostiles closing on him...

There are two ways you can use this option; either the Envoy informs the other characters that a simple trigger word from him will detonate the device, bluffing his way to safety, or the gizmo really is a powerful explosive.

In the first case, the Envoy must spend an action revealing the gizmo and all subsequent actions instructing those around him what it is capable of doing. Make a Persuade roll for the Envoy versus all of the characters in earshot (roll separately for each character) whilst the red luminas on the gizmo wink evilly. The Tau must continue to make these Persuade rolls at the beginning of each of his turns (GMs discretion as to whether the enemy character will pay any attention – a Genestealer is unlikely to care!). Whilst he succeeds in passing these rolls, any enemy affected by this Persuade action must stay frozen in place and put down their weaponry, abandoning all further actions other than to disarm or to move away from the Envoy until the Tau fails to Persuade that character, at which point the effects are nullified. Friendly models will be aware of what the Tau is up to, and may act normally, though if an enemy model sees that another character is doing anything other than backing away or disarming, any Persuade results are discounted and they are free to act normally.

The second option is that the gizmo is really an explosive device, the fabled Apocalypse grenade, in which case use the following profile:

|                           | Type    | Range | Area  | Blast | Dam  | Wt |
|---------------------------|---------|-------|-------|-------|------|----|
| <b>Apocalypse Grenade</b> | Grenade | E     | 8 yds | 10    | 3D10 | 15 |

The grenade will only explode once the trigger word is spoken, allowing the envoy to place the gizmo in an appropriate place for a delayed blast. It will only respond to the Tau's speech pattern. This trigger word must be decided upon before the game.

*"When triggered, this device will flatten everything in a half-mile radius. I am quite prepared to die for the betterment of my race. Whilst you put down your weaponry, ask yourself if the same can be said of you!"*

### 2. HPD (Holographic Projector Device)

The gizmo is capable of projecting a sophisticated hologram, using a refined version of the technology employed in the Tau XV15 Stealth Suits. Designed specifically for the Water Caste, it can project holograms of others (such as the Tau's employer) or even the Tau himself to distract and befuddle his enemies. Many lucrative deals have been clinched in this way with the envoy hidden safely nearby in case things don't work out...

There are two patterns of HPD: Messenger pattern and phimera Pattern. A Messenger pattern HPD plays a prerecorded message. In the heat of battle, it is advantageous for the Tau to use this function to project an image of a fearsome warrior charging forward, thereby distracting his foe.

**HOLOGRAMS** – Before the game, the Tau player picks a model that is not in play as his holographic ally. When the gizmo is activated (costing one action), the Tau player places that model anywhere within line of sight of his model and subsequently controls it as a separate character with a speed of 3 and an initiative of 55. Any character perceiving the hologram must take a Sagacity test at -50% or treat the hologram as if it was exactly as it appears to be. The hologram may not attack in any way, and can only move in straight lines and play prerecorded speech (a deafening scream being favourite). The hologram must always remain within line of

sight of the gizmo (note that the gizmo may be left in place whilst the Tau acts normally). The hologram cannot be damaged, but any character that attacks it successfully may act as normal from that point on; the game is up.

A Chimera pattern HPD projects the image of the Water Caste Envoy himself. This takes two actions to employ and may only be used when the Tau is hidden. Place a marker where the Tau has gone into hiding and then place the Tau model anywhere within line of sight of that point. Use the hologram rules above for this projection. If you have two Water Caste models, the gizmo may be left in place and the owner can act normally as his doppelganger distracts the enemy.

### 3. Man-portable Disruption Pod

Some Tau vehicles are equipped with Disruption Pods- sophisticated scrambler devices that blur and contort the outline of their hull, making it more difficult for enemy weapons to draw a bead on them. The gizmo incorporates a small, man-portable version of the disruption pod, distorting the image of the envoy and making it extremely difficult to draw a bead on him.

The Man-Portable Disruption Pod confers the following benefits:

- No placed shots may ever be attempted on the Tau carrying the gizmo, hence the location rolled always stands, regardless of skills, wargear, dice roll etc.
- Any character that aimed at a model carrying a Disruption Pod will only get +5% added to their chances to hit instead of the usual +20%.
- Any character attacking the Tau with the Disruption Pod in close combat is at a -20% to hit in addition to other modifiers.
- All ranged weaponry that is used to target the bearer of the Disruption Pod counts as being two range categories further away than they actually are (unless that would increase the chances of hitting!). For instance, a sawn-off-shotgun (range A) fired 12 yards from a character with a Disruption Pod counts a -40% penalty to hit instead of the usual -20%.

### 4. Alpha-Category EMP Device

Tau electro-magnetic pulse technology is used mainly by the Fire Caste to disable enemy armour. However, such powerful surges of energy can be used to disable all manner of machines from the humble blast door to the mighty Land Raider, and Alpha category EMP devices, although extremely rare, are said to be able to shut down anything up to an entire hab-block's power supply for a short time.

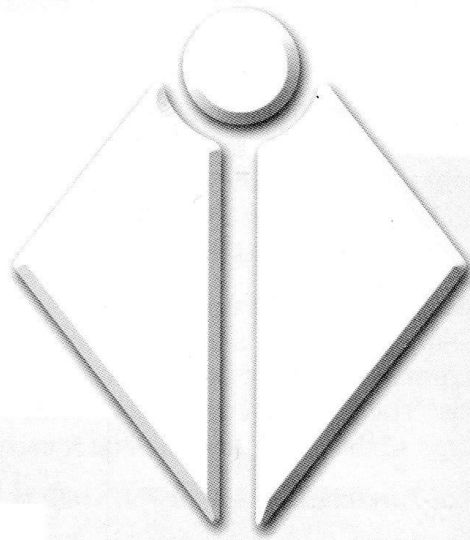
The gizmo incorporates an Alpha-category EMP device which can be triggered by the expenditure of a single action. When it is triggered, no electronic devices may function within 6D6 yards of the character that activated the device for the next D6+1 turns. This has the following effects:

- Power weapons are rendered as normal weapons of the same type for the duration of the pulse. Hence, a power axe would do the same amount of damage as a normal axe, an electro-flail the same as a usual flail, and so on.
- Power armour is rendered entirely dysfunctional, robbing its owner of any characteristic bonuses or special abilities conveyed by it for the duration of the pulse. The full weight of the armour will also act as a massive encumbrance to the wearer, reducing his or her speed by 1. Force fields are nullified whilst the EMP is in effect.
- Any bionic parts will not function at all for the duration of the EMP pulse. Therefore a character with bionic legs will not be able to move faster than a crawl as he drags himself along, a character with bionic eyes will be rendered blind, and Emperor help a character with bionic lungs...
- The following items of wargear are rendered completely useless for the duration of the pulse: all lasguns and laspistols, multi-lasers, digital weapons, lascannon, plasma blaster, plasma gun, plasma pistol, Xenarch death-arcs, Gauss flayers, Neural shredders, chainblades, chain weapons, shock mauls, Dark Eldar Agonisers, Electro-flails, Neural whips, smoke grenades, Blind grenades, photon flashes, haywire grenades, stasis grenades, all force shields and fields of any type, temporal phase distort generators, all auspexes and gunsights, cyber-mastiffs, psyber-eagles, psychic hoods, servo-skulls, cogitator banks, mechadendrites, vehicle engines and any other electronic device at the GM's discretion. Needless to say, the Adeptus Mechanicus aren't too keen on EMP devices...

## 5. Polyglot Hedron

The gizmo is the signature linguistic device of the Water Caste that instantly translates and transmits whatever the Envoy says in the native tongue of the character he's dealing with. This invariably has a positive effect on any deals the Water Caste Tau intends to close.

The Tau only needs to sub-vocalise the words he is forming for the gizmo to pick up and broadcast them, so the net result is that it seems the Tau is chatting away fluently in the language of those he is facing. Alternatively, he can speak out loud in Imperial Gothic so that his companions can understand what he is saying even as the gizmo translates his words into the requisite alien tongue. Even when the Tau is speaking to an individual whose first language is Imperial Gothic, the Polyglot Hedron picks up the appropriate dialect, and broadcasts the envoy's speech in that pattern. A Tau envoy with this device may add +20 to his Sagacity for any Persuade tests whilst the Polyglot Hedron is active.



## 6. Archeotech

This arcane gizmo is an item of indeterminate function but immense value, a relic of a glorious age of technology unearthed from the deepest strata of the underhives that the Tau has managed to swindle out of some unfortunate prospector. Up till now, the Water Caste envoy has been unaware of its function, and has not attempted to use it, preferring to let the Earth Caste give it a thorough examination. However, in the heat of battle, sometimes the element of choice is removed...

Note that this function may not be combined with any other. The Archeotech may be activated by expending an action. Take a Sagacity test at -20%, if it passed the Archeotech is active. Roll a D6 on the chart below to determine its function:

1. The Archeotech emits a symphony of beautiful music, but has no useful game effect.
2. The Archeotech is a powerful force field that springs into place around the Tau, surrounding him in a blue sphere of crackling light. This provides 2D10+2 force field protection against all types of hits, including those made at arms length, but is of no use when the attacker is any closer.
3. The Archeotech is a stable anti-gravitic propulsion unit that bears the Tau into the air. He can move around as normal by manipulating the nodes on the side of the gizmo, can be shot at as normal, but cannot be affected in close combat unless the attacker has a weapon with a reach of 4; he's just too high up! The Tau can ascend and descend at will at roughly 3 yards per action and will never take damage from falling whilst it is activated.
4. The Archeotech is a personal teleport unit. When activated, move the Tau anywhere on the board and scatter him D10 yards in a random direction. It will not teleport him into a place it is impossible for him to enter and survive (such as a bulkhead, off the board edge or into another character) and will stop him 1 yard short if this would be the case. The Tau can teleport as many times per turn as he has actions.
5. The Archeotech is an immensely powerful beam weapon comparable to a multi-laser in potency. It has the following profile:

|            | Type   | Range | Mode                    | Acc | Dam | Wt |
|------------|--------|-------|-------------------------|-----|-----|----|
| Archeotech | Pistol | E     | Semi (4/6)<br>Full (12) | -10 | 3D6 | 15 |

6. The Archeotech uses sophisticated field technology to create a localised anomaly in the gravity field around the bearer. When triggered, all characters within 5D6 yards of the Water Caste are affected as if hit by a graviton gun (roll each turn). If the Tau moves then this field will move with him.

## TAU WATER CASTE SPECIAL ABILITIES

**Blunt:** All Tau have virtually no psychic presence in the Warp. To the daemon, they appear as a shifting will-o-the-wisp rather than the burning fire that represents a human's soul. As such, Tau can never have psychic powers. All daemons, daemonhosts and other denizens of the Warp attempting to detect a Tau have -50% to their Awareness rolls and must roll even when the Tau is in plain sight. If they fail this detection roll, they must act as if they had no knowledge of the Tau's presence.

**Persuade:** The Water Caste Envoy has perfected the art of persuading other individuals to acquiesce to his requests, whether through bargaining, cajoling or even issuing threats. The Tau may attempt to Persuade any other character with a Sg of above 20. The GM is the final arbiter of whether a character may be Persuaded or not, but bear in mind that unless the Water Caster envoy has a polyglot hedron, he may not be able to speak the language of the character to be Persuaded. Characters must be able to hear the Water Caste envoy to be eligible for Persuasion. Needless to say, this is far easier to accomplish under non-combat conditions.

It costs one action to attempt to Persuade another character. Both characters must roll a D100 and add their Sagacity characteristic each time the Water Caste Envoy wishes to use the Persuade skill. The Envoy may add +20 to his roll if the opposing character is not aware of any combat taking place.

- If at any time the Tau character's Persuade total does not exceed that of the opposing character there is no effect and the opposing character may act as normal.
- If the Tau character's total exceeds that of the opposing character, then the opposing character will stop to listen and may not attack any other character in any way during his next turn unless he himself is under direct attack.
- If a successful Persuade total exceeds that of the opposing character on two consecutive actions, the opposing character will give the Tau his undivided attention and cease all other activity for the duration of his next turn unless under direct attack.
- If the Tau successfully performs Persuade actions on the same character for three consecutive actions, the Tau may request that the opposing character performs actions for him instead of for himself or his original master, which he will agree to if he is not being attacked and if it does not directly cause damage or humiliation to the character in question (GMs should be quite firm about this, so no asking that Space Marine to behave like a chicken!).

Once a character has been under the effects of persuasion for three consecutive actions, the only way the effects can be neutralised is if the Water Caste or his allies attack the character under the effects of persuasion.

*For example, a Water Caste Envoy who has successfully persuaded a Desperado character for three turns might ask that the Desperado switches sides for the remainder of the battle, but could not ask him to shoot himself.*

The GM should award or deduct up to 30 to the Persuade roll depending on how convincing and appropriate the player's cover story is in that situation. To follow the example above, the promise of a truckload of Imperial credits and a harem full of beautiful women should do the job...

