

WARHAMMER 40,000

SPACE MARINES UPDATE

FEBRUARY 2020

Designer's Commentary

With the release of *Codex: Space Marines* (and its various codex supplements and Psychic Awakening updates) several months ago, we have been paying close attention to how Space Marines armies have been played with by the community and how well they are faring at tournaments around the globe. We have gathered enough data by this point, and received enough of your feedback, to convince us that the Angels of Death are now one of, if not the, best performing armies in Warhammer 40,000. While we are glad that the Emperor's chosen warriors are faring better than they were before their latest codex, it would appear that, as players get more experience with this army – tailoring their lists to take advantage of certain rules and unveiling all the various tricks and tactics hidden within these books – they are now starting to over perform. As a result, we feel it is necessary to make some changes to the Space Marines' rules to ensure that they remain a fun army to play against, as well as with. This is not something we do lightly, but we feel it is necessary in order to help maintain the balance of the wider Warhammer 40,000 gaming experience.

- Robin Cruddace and the Warhammer 40,000 Rules Team

Tournament Organiser's Commentary

At the end of the day, 40K tournaments – no matter how large, prestigious or competitive – are about providing an opportunity for players to spend time with friends old and new, to divine the state of their luck as revealed by their dice and, most importantly, to have fun. As Tournament Organizer of 40K events at AdeptiCon, providing an enjoyable experience is foremost on my mind. After good sportsmanship, nothing promotes fun more than balance within the game, and so I am excited to tell you that AdeptiCon will fully implement the adjustments in the Space Marines February 2020 update.

Taken as a whole, these changes undeniably and significantly level the playing field in competitive 40K, revitalise the health of the meta and keep the idea of having fun where it belongs: front and centre.

- Jason Lippert, Tournament Organiser and Head Judge, AdeptiCon 40K Events

Combat Doctrines

Combat Doctrines is an ability that we always intended to be purposefully rigid, in that you have to progress through a combat doctrine sequence in a specific order, starting in the Devastator Doctrine and finally ending up in the Assault Doctrine. We maintained a degree of flexibility by letting players choose when they would progress to the next doctrine, imagining that every Space Marines player would wish to progress through the sequence as quick as they could – after all, an average ‘combined arms’ army has more melee weapons in it than it has Rapid Fire weapons (every model technically has a melee weapon) and fewer still have Heavy weapons. The idea was that as the game progressed (and the enemy got closer) you’d get more of a bonus by switching combat doctrines.

However, that has not come to pass, and in the months since its release many players attending competitive matched play events have built lists that are designed to excel in one particular combat doctrine – typically the Devastator Doctrine – to the exclusion of all else, and without any intention of ever progressing through the doctrine sequence. The flexibility of being able to choose when to progress (or not) has ironically led to very inflexible armies, albeit very powerful ones, that dominate the battlefields with an excess of Heavy weaponry throughout the game. We have received plenty of feedback from players on the receiving end of such lists and, after much thought, agree that such armies are currently too powerful. Such armies also do not encourage players to collect the ‘typical’ combined arms force Space Marines are famed for.

As a result, we are changing how the Combat Doctrines ability works so that your army must progress through all of the combat doctrines over the course of the battle. You will still start the battle on the Devastator Doctrine, but you will not be able to stay on that doctrine for the duration of the battle and, at the start of the second battle round, you must change to the Tactical Doctrine. We have maintained some modicum of flexibility, in that you can choose to progress to the Assault Doctrine at the start of either the third or fourth battle rounds, but what you can’t do is stay on Tactical for the remainder of the battle. The effects of the combat doctrines themselves remain the same, and all the combat doctrine bonuses found in the various codex supplements remain unchanged.

Errata to Codex: Space Marines (pg 109), Psychic Awakening: Blood of Baal (pg 34), Psychic Awakening: Ritual of the Damned (pg 35), Combat Doctrines

Replace the Combat Doctrines ability with the following (note that the Devastator Doctrine, Tactical Doctrine and Assault Doctrine remain unchanged):

‘If your army is Battle-forged and if every unit from your army has this ability (excluding **SERVITOR** and **UNALIGNED** units), this unit gains a bonus (see below) depending on which combat doctrine is active for your army, as follows:

- During the first battle round, the Devastator Doctrine is active for your army.
- During the second battle round, the Tactical Doctrine is active for your army.
- At the start of the third battle round, select either the Tactical Doctrine or Assault Doctrine: until the end of that battle round, the doctrine you selected is active for your army.
- During the fourth and subsequent battle rounds, the Assault Doctrine is active for your army.

Unless specified otherwise, this bonus is not cumulative with any other rules that improve the Armour Penetration characteristic of a weapon (e.g. the Storm of Fire Warlord Trait).’

Adaptive Strategy

Given the change to the Combat Doctrines ability, we are also deleting the Adaptive Strategy Stratagem. This Stratagem allowed you to push the combat doctrines ‘back’ by a turn. Though rarely used presently, if a player was forced to move through the combat doctrine progression it would essentially undo what we are trying to achieve with the changes to the Combat Doctrines ability.

Errata to Codex: Space Marines (pg 183), Psychic Awakening: Blood of Baal (pg 56), Psychic Awakening: Ritual of the Damned (pg 53)

Delete the Adaptive Strategy Stratagem.

Duty Eternal

This Stratagem can be used to boost the durability of Dreadnoughts to extreme levels, in some cases doubling the amount of damage these ancient warriors can endure. In conjunction with a nearby character such as a Techmarine – who can easily repair any damage incurred – it can create a disheartening experience for your opponent to face, especially if the Dreadnought in question is something as tough to damage in the first place as a Relic Leviathan Dreadnought. We have listened to this feedback and agree that, in its current form, this Stratagem is too powerful. As a result, we have decided to slightly tone down the damage reduction effects of Duty Eternal. We have also taken the opportunity to make sure this Stratagem will no longer combine with other damage reduction rules, such as that afforded by the Iron Hands Relic, ‘the Ironstone’. Note that, where this Stratagem appears in publications other than *Codex: Space Marines*, the **ADEPTUS ASTARTES** keyword changes depending on the faction the Stratagem relates to. See the FAQ documents for those publications for the exact errata text.

Errata to *Codex: Space Marines* (pg 180), *Psychic Awakening: Blood of Baal* (pg 54), *Psychic Awakening: Ritual of the Damned* (pages 51 & 69)

Change this Stratagem to read:

‘Use this Stratagem when an **ADEPTUS ASTARTES DREADNOUGHT** model from your army is chosen as the target for an attack. Until the end of the phase, when resolving an attack made against that model, you can reduce any damage suffered by 1, to a minimum of 1 (this is not cumulative with any other rules that reduce the damage).’

Cogitated Martyrdom

This Iron Hands Stratagem has been used by some players in order to transfer wounds taken by **DREADNOUGHT CHARACTER** models. This was an oversight on our part – the Stratagem is not intended for use on such durable models who, amongst other benefits, already enjoy the protection of being a character with fewer than 9 wounds. Being able to do so creates situations where certain character Dreadnoughts are virtually invulnerable to enemy fire. Furthermore, several questions regarding the exact timing of this Stratagem have also been raised – this errata should also resolve this commonly asked question.

Errata to *Codex Supplement: Iron Hands*, page 61

Change this Stratagem to read:

‘Use this Stratagem at the start of the Shooting phase. Select one **IRON HANDS INFANTRY** unit from your army. Until the end of the phase, when a friendly **IRON HANDS CHARACTER** model (excluding **VEHICLE** models) within 3" of that unit would lose any wounds as a result of an attack made against that model, that unit can attempt to intercept that attack. Roll one D6 before any rolls to ignore wounds (e.g. The Flesh is Weak, Adamantine Mantle etc.) are made; on a 2+ that model does not lose those wounds and that unit suffers 1 mortal wound for each of those wounds. Only one attempt can be made to intercept each attack.’

Master of Ambush

A tactic that has come to light in recent events is using the Raven Guard Warlord Trait ‘Master of Ambush’ to position a unit of Assault Centurions extremely close to the enemy front lines, almost guaranteeing a first turn charge. Assault Centurions – warriors in mobile warsuits closer to the stature of a Dreadnought than an infantryman – have been designed and costed with their low speed in mind, but this Warlord Trait essentially overcomes the Centurion’s built-in weakness. We feel this combination is too easy to utilise for its devastating effectiveness. As such, we are preventing Centurions from being able to be so stealthy.

Errata to *Codex Supplement: Raven Guard*, page 57

Change the first sentence of this Warlord Trait to read:

‘At the start of the first battle round, before the first turn begins, if this Warlord is on the battlefield you can select one other friendly **RAVEN GUARD INFANTRY** unit (excluding a **CENTURION** unit) on the battlefield.’