

SmallHammer 40K

22APR20 - WDN

About SmallHammer 40K

SmallHammer 40k is a homebrew version of Killteam. Having never actually played Killteam, I've seen a few videos of gameplay. I've always been a big fan of making my own home rules. For example, I purposefully live in Warhammer 3rd edition while the current edition is 8th. The need for homebrew rules started with my Ultramarines specialized group called "EZ Company". I found the 3rd edition rules were too wooden and lacked some of the dynamicism of war such as movement/cover/actual ranges/desperation, etc. That's a different discussion however and belongs with my Warhammer 40k notes. I've also been playing a lot of Dungeons and Dragons 5e with my family and have found some of the combat rules intriguing and wanted to incorporate something like that into 40k. So I have created something on a smaller scale as you will see, this rule set could be played at any scale (ie very large armies) but you really wouldn't want to. This game would be best played with as few models as possible and I'd recommend no more than 10 models per side. Why? You need to keep track of each model's initiative but there is also the added benefit of really appreciating each model's pose, paint job, and look on the table as opposed to a great paint job being lost in the crowd. So all of that out of the way, on to the rules.

Core Rules

Before we start, a lot will be left out of this text and is assumed you will know how to play this part. What is left out? Well pretty much all of my 3rd edition + homebrew rules. Don't worry. If anything deviates from core rules and they will, I will fully explain here. Feel free to use whatever core edition and homebrew rules you like. The beauty is that you are not locked into a ruleset. Think of this as a guide to make your own SmallHammer game.

Set Up

(Example only. Feel free to make your own scenario)

Set Up is very easy and you can really do ANYTHING you want here. Typically, I like to give objectives at random. Mostly because I've never really done that before. Do what you want here, but check out what I've been doing lately.

1. I place six objective D6 die around the field. For aesthetics, you can leave them all on the same number like a 1 or a 6. Works great if you have themed dice. My wife bought me the Ork dice so I've been using that. The 1 and 6 have images of skulls instead of the numbers so that looks good on the table.
2. Role a single control die (1d6). That is your objective number. Place that near any of your "Turn Dice" or just remember the number, however you want to keep track of this. The objective is to find the objective that has this number. More on that later.
3. Deploy your handful of models however you like. Do this in accordance with your own scenario or whatever official scenarios you may be using.
4. (This next part is official SmallHammer, but you can do whatever you want.)
Grab a lot of d10 dice or use whatever other poly-sided die as long as they are greater than 10, d10, d12, d20, whatever you have on hand. Failing that, you can mimic a d12 by using 2d6 if all you have are d6. The reason for the higher side numbers lies in the amount of models on the table. Assuming you went with d10, roll a d10 for each model on the table. Place that d10 next to each model with that roll number on top for reference. This is the model's "Turn Initiative", not the model's initiative stat. That is the turn order for each model for the rest of the game. If you have two models with the same number, just take your pick which goes first during each turn. If your model and your opponent's model has the same number, roll off each turn. If you are using a small amount of models you might just 'adjust' one of the numbers to avoid roll offs each turn. Example: yours and your opponent has a "3". Out of the models on the table, nobody rolled a "4". So you can do a single roll off with your opponent. The winner can simply move from a "3" to a "4". Get creative with it. Do it however you like. This is just a guide to have a very open rule set. These initiative rolls remain for the entire game. Simply take turns via the initiative rolls.

The Objective

For this game, I've prepared a very simple and fun objective. As is the running theme in this document, you can use this or make your own. Make a list of scenarios on your own and play them at random or whatever works for you. So here's one for you to start with.

In the setup step 1, I mention my themed Ork dice my wife bought for me. The 1's are skulls and the 6 is a skull with wrenches. I place the 1's(skulls) randomly around the table. Try placing them with scatter dice or take turns placing them. Of course you can use whatever markers/dice you want. If you want to use cardboard circles or paper, just take write a number 1 through 6 on each. Put them face down so nobody knows what number is under each. Or with the dice, just put them all on the same side.

Now, roll 1d6. That's your objective. When a model encounters a paper circle or dice, turn over the paper or roll that dice. If you use the paper method, you will eventually find the objective. The fun about using a dice is that there is a chance neither team will find the objective. It was just bad intel and didn't exist. That's the reason I like the dice method. I play tested and that scenario came up a lot.

If the objective is found, treat it like a football. That dice now moves around the board with the model. Remove all other dice/objective markers. Now that model has to evacuate that objective marker back to the original deployment zone.

The objective can be lost and recovered by the opponent. If the objective holder dies, the objective is placed where that model fell and may be picked up again by either side. In this scenario, the winner is the one who extracts the objective. For a theme, consider the objective is, personnel, data, weapons cache, an artifact, whatever you want it to be.

If no objective is found by the rolling method, then the battle becomes a war of attrition. Exterminate the opponent entirely. Winner is the one with the last model standing.

The Turn

Sounding like a broken record, do what you want. This is how I play an entire turn of SmallHammer. I use a very modified 3rd Edition. The turn phases are: Maintenance, Psychic, Move, Shoot, Close Combat, and Clean Up.

Maintenance: The maintenance turn is here to handle anything such as a Necron “We’ll be back” roll or any other maintenance style mechanic. If your models have such a mechanic, this is the turn phase. If you’re like me, you’ve probably made one or two very special rules for each of your armies. These are great for making them more “in character” than the official rules. Some of your homebrew rules might fall into this Maintenance phase. One example I have is the World Eaters (pre-heresy but still chaos). I have them roll similar to old school fantasy Orcs animosity rule. 1d6 for each unit in this phase. 1 means they attack the nearest friendly unit, 2~5 they can charge twice the normal distance (12”), 6 means their close combat attacks are treated as power weapon attacks. Those are great examples of homebrew rules that fall into this turn phase.

Psychic: I added this in because I know nothing about 8th edition, but I suspect there might be a psychic phase and that it is somewhere in the beginning. I bought new codexes and they are geared for 8th so obviously, much of it makes no sense to me being a 3rd edition player. That’s why home rules work so well! This is the phase where you launch your psychic powers, fire mind bolts, boil blood, summon things, Foot of Gork, whatever.

Move: Move your models according to your chosen rule set.

Shoot: Allow your models to shoot according to your chosen rule set.

Close Combat: Charge your models into and resolve combat according to your chosen rule set.

Clean Up: This is merely a placeholder turn phase. I can foresee the need for a clean up phase, but currently have no use for it. I envision this phase to be similar to the Maintenance phase, but one that is conducted at the end of the turn.

Special Rules

These special rules are listed here to provide a more themed and realistic feel to the gameplay. I've borrowed from my personal stash of homebrew rules and from my experience with Dungeons and Dragons mechanics. A reminder, these are also from my 3rd edition experience. If later versions of Warhammer core rules do something better for you or you have a homebrew rule you like then please use those rules instead.

Heavy Weapons: This is one of my homebrew rules. In 3rd edition, heavy weapons models cannot fire if they have moved. A typical Space Marine unit might have a sergeant and nine troopers. One of which might be upgraded to a heavy weapon. If you ever want to fire that weapon, you have to have your entire squad remain stationary. Or you can move that squad, but the heavy weapon model may not fire. I've changed that to make the action more dynamic. Heavy weapon model may fire even if they have moved. However, if they move then they fire at a -1 ballistic skill. This represents the hastily set up and aiming that might be required.

Still in Range: One of the things that really bothered me about 3rd edition is how it handles range. If you take a model with a pistol and its target is 12" away, that is the maximum range of that pistol. If that model is 13" away or more suddenly you can't hit it. If you extrapolate that 28mm mini to a 6ft. tall or taller model, you'll find that it is very easy to shoot that target even if it is double the extrapolated range. I spend a lot of time at ranges and can tell you this is so. To represent this using the above example, within the 12" the model shoots as normal. 12"~24" a -1 ballistic skill penalty is added. 24"~36" another -1 ballistic is added stacking so that means a total of -2 ballistic if your target is within 24"~36" away with a pistol. This stacks until the model is so far away that it is impossible to hit it. A 24" range weapon would be normal ballistic up to 24". Each 12" bracket past that is a -1 ballistic and so on. Therefore, the 12" range for a pistol, or a 36" range for a Lascannon are now called "Base Range". The range where the ballistic penalties becomes a 6+ to hit becomes your model's "Maximum Effective Range". A Space Marine (BS +3) with a pistol would have a Maximum Effective Range of 48". Anything beyond that, it is impossible to hit. 48" seems like a lot and it is, but note that it takes a Space Marine rolling a 6 to achieve that hit. This might appear obscure in text so I'll add a quick ascii graphic.

SM(pistol)---+3 Ballistic---(12")-----+4ballistic---(24")-----+5ballistic---(36")-----+6ballistic---(48")—impossible--->

Cover: This is in respect to ballistic skill actions only (shooting). Psychic attacks that mimic shooting such as Doombolt are immune to ballistic skill and either connects or doesn't, but of course must have some form of line of sight even if it is only $\frac{1}{4}$ of the model visible. Cover is very simple, and I really like the incentive this provides to players. Players should be more likely to make use of cover and make the battle seem a little bit more realistic. I know that sounds funny when saying realistic when talking about super human soldiers and chaos demons. I borrowed this concept from my experience playing Dungeons and Dragons. I think D&D's use of cover makes more sense than WH40k's cover saves when inside buildings/bunkers/trees/etc.

Line of sight for cover is to be determined by the base of the model. This is represented by some ascii art below.

1/4 Cover: A model is in 1/4 cover if any portion of the model's base up to 1/4 is obscured. If a model is in 1/4 total cover, the model taking the shot suffers a -1 ballistic skill modifier. This is cumulative/stacks with any other ballistic skill penalties such as moving with a heavy weapon or for ranges beyond base range.

| _____ OBJECT _____ |-----base-----\ (at least 3/4 of the model is visible) (-1 ballistic skill)

1/2 Cover: A model is in 1/2 cover if any portion of the model's base between 1/4 and 1/2 is obscured. If a model is in 1/2 total cover, the model taking the shot suffers a -2 ballistic skill modifier. This is cumulative/stacks with any other ballistic skill penalties such as moving with a heavy weapon or for ranges beyond base range.

| _____ OBJECT _____ |-base---\ (at least 1/2 of the model is visible) (-2 ballistic skill)

3/4 Cover: A model is in 3/4 cover if any portion of the model's base between 1/2 and 3/4 is obscured. If a model is in 3/4 total cover, the model taking the shot suffers a -3 ballistic skill modifier. This is cumulative/stacks with any other ballistic skill penalties such as moving with a heavy weapon or for ranges beyond base range.

| _____ OBJECT _____ |base\ (at least 3/4 of the model is visible) (-3 ballistic skill)

Total Cover: A model is in total cover if line of sight is entirely broken. If a model is in total cover, line of sight is broken and can't be targeted for shooting.

| _____ OBJECT _____ | (model is hidden behind this object and is in total cover)

Stealth: I have several ideas for stealth. Take a look at these ideas to inspire you to make your own. How and when you employ a stealth rule is up to you. In D&D a character would declare he/she/it is sneaking and the DM would have that character roll a d20 and if the check passes, he/she/it is sneaking. I'm avoiding the use of d20 dice in Smallhammer. So I have a few ideas that might inspire you and will pick one that I will call official (for my use at least).

Stealth Idea 1: This one puts the onus on the model attempting the sneak and is the method I intend to use in my Smallhammer games. Simply roll a 1d6. A 1, 2, or 3 is a failure. A 4, 5, or 6 is a success. Add modifiers to this base roll such as a -1 to the check if the model attempting to sneak is within 12" of an enemy model. Add a -2 to the check if this range is 6".

Stealth Idea 2: This is the same as the first idea except this puts the onus on the opponent's model. Can that model detect the stealthy intruder? I personally might shy away from this one as then every opponent model would have to make that check. Though I leave the idea here as it might come in handy as inspiration for another fork of this theme or anything else that might enhance your game.

Stealth Idea 3: You could actually run d20 in your game for this concept. Come up with a passing number for your entire squad/army or a stealth value for each of your models. You can then roll 1d20 to verify if your models is sneaking.

Nightfighting: I will use the 3rd edition WH40k core rules for this. Purchase that book for this info. I think the pure vanilla 3rd edition night fighting rules work well here. If your scenario is at night simply utilize these rules. I can sort of outline them here, but don't want to get too specific so I don't infringe upon Games Workshop. Nightfighting 3rd edition rules typically means you select a unit you control and a potential target. You roll to determine if your unit can see the target or not. Work out whatever rules you like for this effect. Again, can't get too specific. At least this gives you an idea of how to look up the official rules or make your own version. If your scenario is not at night or vision is not obscured by heavy fog, battlefield smoke, or similar vision inhibiting issues then you can ignore this rule completely.

Movement/Actions: Having not really played SpaceHulk, but sort of get the idea and also combining some bits of Dungeons and Dragons, I've put this special rule here. I've been using dry erase grid panels readily found in gaming supplies for SmallHammer. You don't have to, but if you do you might draw a door that is closed, an object to interact with, or some other thing that requires some sort of action. I like in D&D that you can move, attack something, then move again until you exhaust your movement. I also like the "Action Points" allocated to characters in SpaceHulk. Marrying the ideas into SmallHammer can make the game pretty fun and dynamic. Example: Say you have a pure vanilla Space Marine. It has

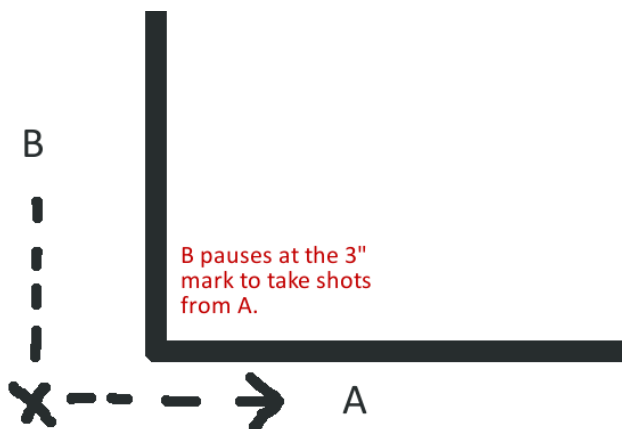
a movement of 6". That marine will have 6AP. Interacting with objects will occur during the movement phase to make this easier. You are 3" away from a closed door and have to pick up and carry a package that sits on the other side of that door. Using this rule you might 1. Move the 3" to the door. 2. Open the door taking one of your movement points. 3. Move 1" past the door. 4. Pick up the box exhaust the last of the 6 action points.

Or

You might move the marine 4" (leaving 2 points left), then go into Overwatch for 1 point. Ending your turn throwing away that 6th point as you didn't need it. You are possibly in cover and on overwatch.

Why move that last 1"?

Overwatch: This takes us right into overwatch. A lot of GW (GamesWorkshop) games have such a mechanic or at least I think I saw them somewhere. It might have been SpaceHulk, again something I have never really played. Overwatch is a way to "be ready to fire" when the enemy presents itself. Dungeons and Dragons doesn't really have overwatch, but has something similar where a player can ready a weapon or spell to use as a reaction. The spirit is the same. See image below. In this example, Space Marine A went into overwatch. It is now Space Marine B's turn and has 6" movement speed. Space Marine B intends on rounding the corner, shooting, then assaulting A. Since A is in overwatch, B's movement is halted just as it is in view/range. A takes it's overwatch shot. Then remove the marker or whatever you use to indicate overwatch as it is expended (can't dakka dakka forever on overwatch!). B can then complete it's turn by finishing the move, shoot, then assault. This is a very dynamic action to add to a game. One can only go into overwatch if the model does not shoot or assault that turn.



Summary of Rules / Cheat Sheet

Set Up

1. I place six objective D6 die around the field.
2. Role a single control die (1d6). That is your objective number.
3. Deploy your models.
4. Roll a d10 for each model on the table. Place that d10 next to each model. This is initiative.
5. Simply take turns via the initiative rolls.

The Turn

Maintenance: (Necron "We'll be back" roll or any other maintenance style mechanic.)

Psychic: This is the phase where you launch your psychic powers.

Shoot: Allow your models to shoot according to your chosen rule set.

Close Combat: Charge your models into and resolve combat according to your chosen rule set.

Clean Up: This is a placeholder phase, possibly a need for it similar to the Maintenance phase.

Special Rules

Heavy Weapons: may fire even if they have moved but take -1 ballistic penalty. This penalty can stack.

Still in Range: Every 12" bracket past the base range suffers a -1 ballistic penalty. This stacks.

Cover: 1/4 Cover: -1 / 1/2 Cover: -2 / 3/4 Cover: -3 / Total Cover: impossible

Stealth: Roll a 1d6. A 1, 2, or 3 is a failure. A 4, 5, or 6 is a success. -1 modifier if in 12" / -2 if in 6".

Nightfighting: I will use the 3rd edition WH40k core rules for this. Purchase that book for this info.

Movement/Actions: The model's movement range in inches translates to total action points spent in the movement phase: moving, opening doors, interacting with switches, picking up things, etc.

Overwatch: End your turn spending a movement action point to go into overwatch preparing to shoot/surprise an enemy unit when they get into range and visible.