

Welcome to *Diaspora* –

Diaspora is a self-contained role-playing game, building on FATE (and particularly *Spirit of the Century*). It's a game about the future, with humanity scattered through the stars living in clusters of six to ten systems, making do in a hostile universe. FTL travel is challenging, and reaction drives push large ships between planets, draining reaction mass, and avoiding dangers along the way.

Diaspora is about stories, and is designed as a toolkit to facilitate telling hard(ish) SF stories at your game table. You build the setting of a cluster of systems, and then you inhabit it with your characters. It comes with a series of minigames – none of which need to be used, but which provide mechanical means to determine outcomes to stories that are in the process of being told. One chapter describes personal combat, and has a gritty feel, because shooting things with a shotgun in a spacesuit can be fun. Another makes social combat into a tactical game – so that players make strategic decisions about how they behave at a cocktail party, or when being tortured in other ways. A third minigame allows platoon combat, because sometimes a story needs a good hovertank battle. Finally, there is space combat, which we have included here as a sample chapter.

Space Combat in *Diaspora* is abstracted: a one-dimensional map tracks rival vectors of a few fragile ships blazing away at each other. It's also lethal, as it should be, and military and technically superior ships have an easier time. As a stand-alone game, it can be a fun way to pass the evening. As part of a *Diaspora* campaign, it tells the sorts of stories that we find fun. And fun is what it's all about.

Since this is just the chapter as-it-is-in-the-book, we assume some familiarity with FATE, rolling FUDGE dice, using aspects, etc., that are described in chapter 1. If you know that, you should be able to play the game by itself. We hope you will enjoy the mechanics, find in them things that make good sense at your game table, and enjoy the layout. It's a good sample of *Diaspora* as a whole, and if you enjoy what you see, we hope you'll consider buying the game.

You can follow *Diaspora* discussions on our mailing list, which you can sign up for on our website, <http://www.vsca.ca/Diaspora/>. There's also information there about ordering.

Happy gaming,

The Diaspora Team.

diaspora

**hard science-fiction
role-playing with fate**

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6. space combat

As its engines flared, the Midnight Dancer pushed toward the inner planets with an acceleration that it wouldn't be able to counter without using up its r-mass. But then the vector changed, and the ship began to rise, imperceptibly at first, away from the plane of the ecliptic. Over the next two days, it angled up, no longer heading for anywhere in this system, but for the slipstream point, and for escape. It was the only destination it could be heading for, the only reason any one would leave the system proper, and get above the sun. But we had more reaction mass, and we would catch them before they would slip. Or so we thought until we saw the telltale flare of a ship arriving from the other side, first one, then another. They had friends coming.

Spacecraft are large, relatively fragile things pursuing their goals at high velocity in the dead of space. They are constrained by their available reaction mass, the mass allocated for trade cargo, and their ability to dissipate heat. When they test each other to destruction using the assorted weapons of space combat—beams, torpedoes, and electronic warfare—they are chiefly pursuing goals of domination or escape. This system emphasizes these goals. The stories we want to tell include:

- an inferior ship escaping from the authorities
- a hostile vessel capturing cargo
- a threat so powerful the only real option is to surrender
- a convoy of merchants and escorts safely defending itself from marauders

Space combat occurs on a simple 1-dimensional map that emphasizes pursuit and range and ignores the specifics of three dimensional positioning in order to pro-

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vide a simple and fast system that still feels “real.”

Combat occurs in phases. First is the detection phase which establishes the initial positions. Then the positioning, electronic warfare, beams, torpedoes, and damage control phases are repeated in order until everyone is happy, dead, or escaped. Order of action is controlled by social pressure: a player is designated caller for the fight and that person controls the transition from phase to phase (see sidebar on “Social Initiative”). If a player wants to act in a particular phase, he announces his action. The advantage of going first goes to the one that speaks first. The advantage of going last goes to the person who speaks last. When the caller calls for a change of phase, it is possible that some players failed to act in time.

the crew

Diaspora assumes that spacecraft have a fully functional crew aboard, who draw a salary and are able to man their stations competently. There is no need to flesh them out unless there are role-playing reasons to do so, and player characters can work beside an undifferentiated crew happily.

Except as noted below, all combat crew positions on a ship are assumed to be staffed by someone with a Skill level of 2.

The purpose of this assumption is to allow a default Skill level of 2 to exist on board for each combat crew position for which the ship has a value of at least 1 (or, in the case of Pilot Skill, the default equals the ship’s V-shift rating, to a maximum of 5). If a ship has torpedoes, it also routinely carries a gunner capable of launching the torpedoes. Military ships with an EW of at least 2 will carry someone with Military-grade Communications (at Skill level 2); civilian ships will do so only when the EW is at least 4. PCs serving aboard such ships may use their individual Skill levels, but if they choose not to (e.g. if they ride as passengers), there is always someone who can do the job.

A ship’s Trade value is not used in combat, and therefore there is no default broker aboard to assist with maintenance rolls.

The exception to this is a spacecraft that has the Skeleton Crew Stunt, in which case all the jobs in combat must be taken by a known individual (either a player character or an NPC who has been developed) who is trained in the relevant Skill. In particular, Communications and Gunnery stations, if they have a positive value, may not be operated by an untrained individual.

For each crew position, there is only ever one person doing a given job at a given time. One Navigator rolls in the detection phase, and only one Computer expert rolls to repair the Data track.

A PC may occupy more than one position on the ship, but it becomes challenging during combat. Each Skill associated with a combat phase normally requires a single crew member to staff it.

Staffing more than one crew position during combat earns a -1 cumulative penalty to the effective Skill level.

A gunner may fire beams offensively and defensively without penalty, but would receive a penalty on the torpedo roll if he has fired beams.

Each crew member may only act once per phase in combat.

A single gunner may not fire beams defensively and launch torpedoes in the same phase.

spacecraft

Spacecraft are the unit of scale in this mini-game, and not player characters. They have their own Skills (V-shift, Electronic Warfare, Beams, and Torpedoes), Stunts, Aspects, and stress tracks (Frame, Data, and Heat). The mini-game will involve rolling those Skills to achieve results and marking damage against those stress tracks. Spacecraft can mitigate stress hits with three Consequences, just as characters do. You will find a list of ships at the end of the chapter, and later a method for creating your own.

Spacecraft not designated as Civilian can only be flown by characters with the Military-grade Pilot Stunt. Further, offensive use of the EW ship Skill can only be done by characters with the Military-grade EW Stunt. Aspects listed are meant as suggestions: every ship has its own quirks and personality.

Here is an example of a good player character spacecraft, a T2 vessel that makes its living through common piracy. This ship is a civilian vessel because piracy is not a military activity.

T2 Civilian Pirate, “The Silent Sufferer”

V-shift 3, Beam 4, Torpedo 0, EW 0, Trade 2

Frame OOO

Data OOO

Heat OOO

Vector randomizer: base defense 2 against beam.

Civilian: can be piloted without military training.

Slipdrive: can traverse slipstreams.

Rotating license plates

Glory-hungry pirates

Camel of space (long time between refills and repairs)

Friendly and approachable

Big bowls of fresh fruit

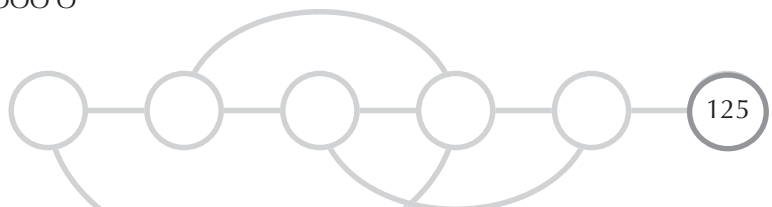
The Captain

Profession: Spokesmodel 3; Resolve 2, Alertness 2; Charm 1, Slug Thrower 1,

Intimidation 1

Health OOO

Composure OOO O



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The ship has a default crew with Navigation, Gunnery, Computer, and Engineering (space skills) at level 2. The crew's default pilot has level 3 (to match the V-shift of the ship).

Pirate Crew

Brawling 3; Slug Thrower 2, default Space Skill 2; Stamina 1, Agility 1, Resolve 1
Health OOO O
Composure OOO O

the map

Space combat is hard to represent in all three dimensions: the math gets complicated fast and the payoff is minor unless you really like the map. As any abstraction from three dimensions to two is going to be either a big abstraction or an inaccurate one, we've chosen to go all the way and abstract space combat to one dimension. The rationale for this is simple: mostly what we care about is managing range and building enough change in velocity to escape or to deny escape to another.

So our map becomes a piece of ruled paper, number each line from -4 to 4 and place (or draw) ship models on the lines.

Moving a ship between the 3 and 4 bar (or the -3 and -4) costs 2 shifts. Moving a ship from the last bar off the map costs 3 shifts.



Because of the constraining boundaries (escaping the map is escape from combat, or forced removal from combat) we have to see the map as also abstracting relative

velocities. That is, we are not collapsing 3-dimensional position information into 1-dimensional (range) position information. Rather we are collapsing everything about the current 4-dimensional space state of an object into a position on the map. Therefore the map should be read thus:

- The distance between two vessels is their separation in space. The distance between two vessels does not encode their bearing, heading, or velocity.
- The distance between a vessel and the nearest boundary is, roughly, a measure of its vector (both direction and magnitude) away from a hypothetical ship at range bar 0.

When a player determines position, then, he is determining the range between his placements but he is also determining their relative velocities. Placing two ships at the zero line means that not only are they close, but they are not moving relative to the hypothetical observer. More importantly, they are not moving relative to each other.

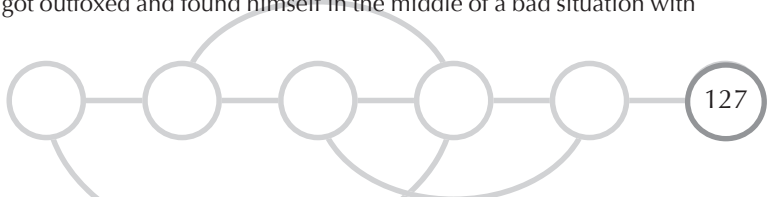
This need not be true of two ships sharing the -4 line. They may have widely diverging vectors though they are close in space or they may be far apart on parallel vectors. Should they remain in this map location at the end of the next turn, the transition should be read as the vessels have diverged and then re-converged, retaining large differences in velocity vectors. They could be seen as “braiding” around each other.

Where it is desired that ships be in close proximity to each other and sharing vectors and at the same time be distant from other vessels, formation and tethering rules may be used to collapse the ship representations.

Placing a ship near the boundary indicates that that vessel is moving rapidly away from the battle.

So when we have a case of three fleeing ships placed near a boundary being pursued by one ship some bars away towards the zero line, we do not just have three ships far away from a pursuer. We have also indicated by map position that the three ships are already moving much more rapidly than the pursuer, and in different directions. This is why an excellent V-shift roll on the part of a pursuer can only allow him to move one vessel: he must now choose between moving one pursued vessel towards him, modeling a change in relative distance and velocity between the two (he has cut off after one vessel) or he can move himself closer to all three but also closer to the edge, indicating that he’s trying to maintain distance to all of them but at the same time acknowledging that he now has a massive velocity vector that doesn’t necessarily intersect with any of them: by averaging their hypothetical directions he’s not actually pursuing any. If he doesn’t make the shot it’s unlikely that he will be able to change his velocity enough to keep at least one from escaping.

This abstraction denies some level of tactical decision from the players. A player cannot, for example, decide to apply thrust left by noticing his opponent has applied thrust right. But more importantly, a player can’t really decide on low level group tactics like “we’ll all fly in different directions.” Those decisions might well be encoded in a great Navigation roll at the outset that lets him position all his vessels near the escape line, but that level of tactical decision-making is actually embodied in the Skill of the character rather than the player. A lousy Navigation roll might leave a player with no options at all—he got outfoxed and found himself in the middle of a bad situation with



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no relative velocity and with his (smarter) friends moving rapidly away. The player, in a way, decides how to deploy the tactical abilities of his characters.

Collapsing four dimensions of state into one is going to lose some information in the process. There will be some things that you can't explicitly model (that is, there may be a story you want to see that cannot be represented). It does succeed at the reverse: for every board state and state change, there is an interesting and believable story that can be told. Further, the stories that are told are definitive of the genre—out-matched pursuit, well-matched firefights, and blockade running.

social initiative

The space combat mini-game operates using a form of social initiative. While often it is possible for the caller to start with one player who wants to act first and to proceed simply around the table, the stalemate-inducing anxieties of the uncertain commitment of resources over time can be fun to play with—it creates the eerie feel of submarine combat, reducing the information available as decisions get made. For each of phases 1-4, the decision to act first resides with the player who states that they act first, with the caller determining priority if more than one person speaks at a time (or the table if the caller is controlling one of the affected ships).

Going first entails a commitment of resources, and responses to the initial action can be proportionate, using the information of how much the first player has committed.

Resources, once committed, can only be increased. They are never decreased.

As each phase ticks by, players may hold back attacking to wait until they see if they are being attacked and by how many, or they may strike hard and fast, filling their Heat track and hoping for a quick kill (or escape!).

the sequence

Space combat is played in turns, each of which might represent fifteen to thirty minutes of in-game time—this too has been largely abstracted. Each turn consists of several phases, and each phase will offer a test—an opportunity to cross-compel, a roll, and an opportunity to tag and/or invoke Aspects.

The phases are:

- Detection
- Position
- Electronic warfare
- Beam
- Torpedo
- Damage control

detection

Before a fight can start, everyone needs to find each other. Position will be plotted on a linear scale from -4 to +4 on the map. As always, before any dice are rolled, the caller will ask for compels, at which time players can compel each other to fail to act. Failure to act in this case is represented by an automatic result of -4 (dice are not rolled and Skills are not considered: your final result for your Navigation check is -4).

A Navigation check is rolled by each ship's navigation officer, and all rolls are ranked. Ties are resolved by raw Navigation Skill. The highest ranked Navigator will place two of the ships to be played on the map anywhere except the two most distant lines (-4 and 4). The next highest rank then places a single ship and this continues until all ships are placed. The lowest ranking Navigator places nothing.

The ship which wins the detection round may also decide if there will be a positioning roll in the first turn (only). Once all the ships are placed, the winning ship in this phase decides whether to proceed to phase 1 or directly to phase 2. This allows a ship to attempt escape without engaging in combat immediately on being detected—going to phase 1—or it allows it to use the tactical position from the detection phase for an optimized initial combat round - going to phase 2.

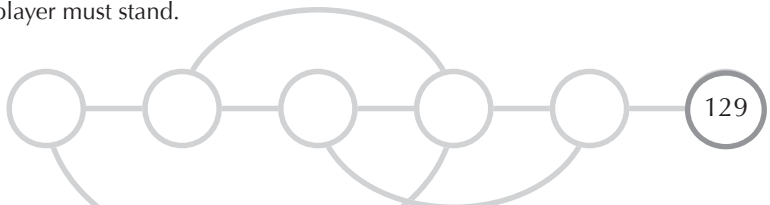
In the event of a tie between two ships (as might happen when two standard T2 merchant ships meet, with default navigators), if neither ship is willing or able to invest fate points to gain victory, ships are placed randomly, based on a roll of the fate dice (it is only in this circumstance that a ship may begin at the 4 or -4 band).

position

As always, before any dice are rolled, the caller will ask for compels, at which time players can compel each other to fail to act. Failure to act in this case is represented by an automatic result of -4 (dice are not rolled and Skills are not considered: your final result for your positioning check is -4).

Spacecraft positions are plotted on a simple linear scale from -4 to +4. Ships begin as they were placed in the detection phase. At the beginning of each round of combat, pilots jockey for position. All pilots roll their ship's V-shift rating limited by their effective Pilot Skill (i.e. if one character is serving both as Navigator and Pilot, then the Pilot's effective Pilot Skill is reduced by one). Note also that this is not simply a modifier to the roll: since V-shift is limited by effective Pilot Skill, this penalty might affect performance for the first turn as well.

In addition, ships may apply burn: by running their drives over rating, they can exchange Heat for an advantage in maneuver, improving the V-shift roll. Any ship may declare that it is applying burn, state the value and add that value to their roll (not to the V-shift rating). They immediately take a hit to their Heat stress track equal to the value of their burn, marking that box and all unmarked boxes below it. If the highest box to be marked is already marked, mark the next higher open box. Before marking the damage to the Heat stress track, the pilot may reduce the detrimental effects through Consequences exactly as mitigating combat damage. The caller may allow negotiation of burn declarations at his preference, though generally a declared burn rating by a ship's player must stand.



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Ships may choose not to use their drives in order to bleed heat. Each turn that the V-Shift is not engaged allows the highest filled box in the Heat track to be cleared immediately. This decision results in an automatic -4 final result for the positioning check, which might still be modified by Aspects, but no dice are rolled and no Skill is used.

No burn declarations can be made once the caller declares the bidding closed and asks for dice on the table.

Only the highest roller may alter any ship's positions:

- He may move himself the difference between his roll and the lowest roll, or
- He may move any ship with a lower roll up to the level of the difference between them.

He may not, however, move any vessel more map bands than his own vessel's V-shift rating. Remember, moving a ship between the 3 and 4 bar (or the -3 and -4) costs 2 shifts, and moving a ship from the last bar off the map costs 3 shifts.

Example: Daniel De Soto (Pilot 4) is trying to escape in a stolen ship (V-shift 1) from a police cruiser (V-shift 3, with a default Pilot 3). Daniel's ship is at the 3 band, the cruiser is at the zero band. Dice are rolled, some fate points are spent, and Daniel's ship ends up with a total of 7, the police cruiser with 4. That's three shifts, which is enough to take his ship to the 4 band (the maximum he is allowed to move since the ship's drive value is 1), or to move the police ship to either the 1 or the -1 band: despite the number of ships, there is only so fast he can pull away. Daniel is making a break for it, and his ship moves to the 4 band. Next turn, he will probably initiate a burn in hopes of escape: he needs at least three shifts again to leave the map, and a bad roll could mean the police cruiser pulls him back, from the 4 band to the 1 band (since its V-shift is 3), drawing out the combat much longer than Daniel wants.

If the winning positioning roll is tied, the next highest roll is the winner. This presents some interesting tactical choices for fate point expenditure: sometimes it's advantageous to forfeit your awesome roll so that your ally, who rolled lower, can make use of his better V-shift, for example. You might then use an Aspect to force a tie so that you lose control.

If a ship exceeds the band at -4 or 4, they leave combat, whether forced off by others or maneuvered off by their own pilots. In this fashion a really excellent pilot in a hot ship can cut down the odds by positioning enemy vessels off the map until he faces only one opponent. Similarly, more than two ships chasing a single ship can usually keep the lone opponent on the map through positioning.

electronic warfare

As always, before any dice are rolled, the caller will ask for compels, at which time players can compel each other to fail to act. Failure to act in this case is represented by the ship being unable to declare a target.

Before any destructive weapons are used, each ship may conduct electronic warfare, pitting its communications officer against the enemy. If a communications officer has Military-grade Communications, she may pick a target and roll the ship's Electronic Warfare (EW) rating, amplified by her effective Communications Skill (if the communications officer has acted in any of the previous phases, there is a cumulative -1 penalty

for each phase she has acted). The defender also makes a roll, of his ship's EW rating, amplified by the communications officer's effective Communications Skill. The rating may be zero, in which case there is no crewman staffing the position unless this is done by one of the PCs. Ships may have a Stunt (Firewall) that automatically provides a defense value of 2, and which may not be modified. Subtract the defender's modified roll from the attacker's.

As with any roll, these results can now be modified by tagging or invoking Aspects and paying a fate point to get +2 or re-roll.

Positive values are treated as shifts against the defender.

Negative values are treated as shifts against the attacker.

Whoever has shifts against him will take a Data stress track hit to the ship. Before damage is calculated, the player may apply Consequences to reduce the number of shifts: a mild Consequence reduces the shifts by one, a moderate Consequence reduces the shifts by two, and a severe Consequence reduces the shifts by four. Recall that no entity can have more than three Consequences of any kind and never more than one of each type.

Once the final number of shifts are determined, the corresponding box on the Data stress track is marked and all open boxes below it are also marked. If the highest box to be marked has already been marked, mark the next highest.

Note that only one roll is made for each ship, so in some cases with more than two ships in play, a single roll may defend against multiple attacking rolls as well as conceivably acting as the attacking roll on a declared target. Note also that a good defense against hacking can inflict damage on the attacking Data stress track, even if the defending communications officer does not have Military-grade Communications.

The Electronic Warfare (EW) defense roll is persistent through this phase, but the total may be added to over the course of the phase through the spending of fate points. An outnumbered ship may still mount a reasonable defense.

Example: an interdiction cruiser (EW 3) is conducting EW on the Southpaw (EW 0). Rampion Budge (Communications 1) is alone on the ship, and is trying simply to escape. It's the first turn, and Rampion has already made a Navigation roll and a Pilot roll (at -1). Now, with the EW assault, he has to make a Communications roll as well at (-2). This leaves him scrambling, and means that he won't fire his Beams this turn; at an automatic -3, there is too much likelihood to grant the defender spin, and given his desperate situation, that's the last thing Rampion wants! If he survives this encounter, he'll want to get a Firewall.

The cruiser (EW 3) has a crewman with MG Communications 2, which means the position is staffed but the roll will not be amplified. The referee rolls -1, for a total of 2, but pays a fate point to raise it by 2, tagging the cruiser's Aspect of "Pull over, we just want to talk," for a total of 4. The Southpaw has no EW value, and Rampion has Communications 1. This would normally be enough to amplify his EW roll (creating an effective EW of 1), but since he has already served double duty, Rampion's effective communications Skill is reduced by one. He is still trained, and can mount the defense, but his roll will simply modify the base EW of 0. He rolls well: +1, for a total of 1. That's three shifts, when compared with the cruiser's

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roll of 4, a significant hit on the Southpaw's Data track, but one that could perhaps be reduced by investing a fate point and tagging a relevant Aspect: perhaps the system's Aspect "Intense solar flares" (which are interrupting the signal) or the Southpaw's Aspect "Not the ship you're looking for."

Rampion's player decides to swallow the hit, in hopes of saving the points for a getaway next turn. The referee notices that Rampion Budge has an Aspect "Is this thing on?" and offers him a fate point, suggesting that with everything going on, his EW defense may have been further compromised. If he takes it, that increases the shifts to five, and he'd need to use Consequence to stay in the game. This is too much for Rampion's player, who refuses the fate point, gives one to the referee, and takes the data hit, crossing off the first, second, and third box.

beam weapons

Beam weapons subsume all relatively short range unguided weaponry, so for story purposes they may be described as lasers of various wavelengths, artillery, rockets, railguns, electromagnetically propelled storms of small projectiles, particle beams, or anything else that suits the setting developed at the table.

As always, before any dice are rolled, the caller will ask for compels, at which time players can compel each other to fail to act. Failure to act in this case is represented by a failure to declare a target in whatever phase the player ship was compelled.

A ship with a Beam Skill can attack at a value from 1 up to the full Beam rating.

All combat rolls, offensive and defensive, are made at the Beam rating amplified by the gunner's Gunnery Skill (that is, the Beam rating is used and increased by one if the Gunnery Skill is higher). If the gunnery officer has acted in any of the previous phases, there is a cumulative -1 penalty to the effective Skill level for each phase he has acted. Defensive rolls are made once for each defensive system but stay on the table—that defensive roll you made against Beams stands throughout the Beam Weapons phase, complete with any modifications from invoking Aspects, using spin, etc. Defensive rolls are persistent through the phase, so it can be handy to note them on the ship card or use a coloured 12- or 20-sided die set to the result. Sometimes we write them on the map. Offensive Beam rolls are distinct from defensive Beam rolls (from the Torpedo phase) and should be recorded separately.

A roll with no modification is made to oppose all incoming Beam attacks. Ship's may have a Stunt (Vector Randomizer) that changes the base from 0 to 2.

When Beams are fired offensively the attacker must declare what Beam rating he will apply. He may apply any value from 1 to the full Beam rating. Note the Beam value used.

Beams firing at three or more bands range subtract 2 from the roll.

Attacks are resolved as they are declared, again leveraging social pressure to determine who goes first: the caller closes the call for targets by announcing a final call, and counting slowly to three (if necessary—if your caller is fair and fun, he'll leave plenty of time), after which no further targets can be announced.

Subtract the final defender's sum from the attacker's to find the number of shifts. The defender may reduce these by applying one or more Consequences: reduce the

shifts by one by applying a mild Consequence, reduce the shifts by two by applying a moderate Consequence, and reduce the shifts by four by applying a severe Consequence. Recall that no entity may have more than three Consequences and never more than one of each kind.

torpedoes

As always, before any dice are rolled, the caller will ask for compels, at which time players can compel each other to fail to act. Failure to act in this case is represented by a failure to declare a target in whatever phase the player ship was compelled.

Torpedoes attack at the spacecraft's Torpedo Skill rating.

All combat rolls, offensive and defensive, are made at the Torpedo rating amplified by the gunner's effective Gunnery Skill (that is, the Torpedo rating is used and increased by one if the effective Gunnery rating is higher). If the gunnery officer has acted in any of the previous phases (including the Beam phase), there is a cumulative -1 penalty for each previously active phase. Defensive rolls are made once for each defensive system but stay on the table—that defensive roll you made with the Beams stands throughout the Torpedo Phase, complete with any modifications from Aspect invocation, spin, or other sources. As these rolls are persistent through the phase, it can be handy to note them on the ship card or use a coloured 12- or 20-sided die set to the result. Sometimes we write them on the map. Though persistent, defensive rolls are distinct from offensive rolls and should be recorded separately.

A Beam roll is made to oppose all incoming Torpedoes. To do this, the beam position must be staffed. If Beams were fired in the Beam Weapons phase, then the roll may be made as usual, amplified by gunner's effective Gunnery Skill. If Beams were not fired, then there must be a trained crew member available to man the beams in this phase: normal penalties and bonuses apply, but since each crew member may only act once per phase, a ship with a single gunner (as might happen with a skeleton crew) may have to choose between offensive Torpedo fire and defensive Beam fire. Beams so used may also have been fired offensively, and defensive fire may cause damage to the Heat stress track. Ships with no Beam rating or those unwilling to fire Beams defensively, roll with a base of 0 unless they have a Stunt (Point Defense) that changes the base from 0 to 2.

When Beams are fired defensively the attacker must declare what Beam rating he will apply. He may apply any value from 0 to the full Beam rating. Note the Beam value used. If the sum of the offensive Beam used plus the defensive Beam used is greater than the total Beam rating, then the ship takes a hit on the Heat stress track equal to the difference and marks all boxes below as well.

Torpedoes firing at one or zero bands range subtract 2 from the roll.

Attacks are resolved as they are declared, again leveraging social pressure to build an initiative order as in the Beam phase. The caller closes the call for targets by announcing a final call, and counting slowly to three, after which no further targets can be announced.

Subtract the final defender's sum from the attacker's to find the number of shifts. The defender may reduce these by applying one or more Consequences: reduce the shifts by one by applying a mild Consequence, reduce the shifts by two by applying

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a moderate Consequence, and reduce the shifts by four by applying a severe Consequence. Recall that no entity may have more than three Consequences and never more than one of each kind.

Example: the Conquering Fist (Beam 4) has scored a hit on the missile boat Sunshine's Promise (Torpedo 3) in the Beam phase, adding a mild Consequence "The handle came off." In the Torpedo phase, Sunshine's Promise launches a Torpedo salvo. The base value of 3 is not affected by the default gunner (Gunnery 2), and at range 3 it does not need to face the penalty that the Conquering Fist dealt with in the previous phase. The gunner rolls 0, for a total of 3. The Conquering Fist elects not to fire its Beams: its heat track is full, and it had used its full beams in phase three. Against a base defense of 0, the Conquering Fist's gunner rolls +1, for a total of 1. However, "The handle came off" on Sunshine's Promise, and the Fist tags the Consequence for free (it's the first time it's been tagged), granting +2 and giving each side 3. The torpedoes sail past the bow of the Conquering Fist, slightly off target because of a malfunction with the launch handle aboard Sunshine's Promise.

Note that before the Fist made its roll, Sunshine's Promise had the option of trying to compel a defense: if the ship had an Aspect such as "Space lasers of death" or the gunner had an "Itchy trigger finger," these could have been compelled to make the Fist fire its lasers defensively, which would have led to a Consequence from the heat track, and maybe even taken the ship out! Space fights are dangerous!

damage control

Damage control checks may now be made on Frame stress tracks (using one crew member's effective Engineering Skill) or Data stress tracks (using one crew member's effective Computer Skill). Since each crew may only staff one position per phase, the same individual may not be responsible for both rolls. If the engineer or computer officer has acted in any of the previous phases, there is a cumulative -1 penalty for each previously active phase. The target number for success is the highest box marked on the relevant track. The number of successes indicate the track box that can be erased. Erase it and all unmarked boxes below it.

The Heat stress track cannot be repaired during combat, except by shutting off engines, as described in the positioning phase.

Example: the Meritorious Conduct has a 6-box Frame stress track with boxes four and below filled.

The Engineer 3 is trying to make repairs, and rolls against a difficulty of 4 (highest Frame box hit). If he can generate 4 shifts he can repair the worst of the damage. Even fewer shifts will help though. It's a hard roll—the engineer rolls +1, which added to his Skill gives a total of 4. That's a pretty good roll but against difficulty 4, it's still no shifts and nothing is repaired.

However, that engineer might be a player character, in which case he could spend a fate point and use his “Handy with a spanner” Aspect. That gets him +2 for 6. That’s two shifts against difficulty 4 and he could at least repair the first two boxes. Now she can take a little more, Captain.

damage

Shifts for a given attack are calculated by the difference between an adjusted attack roll and an adjusted defense roll.

Consequences can be used to buy down these shifts before they are applied as damage. Mild Consequence reduces the number of shifts by one, a moderate Consequence reduces the shifts by two, and a severe Consequence reduces the shifts by four. A ship may only have a maximum of one Consequence of each severity. A ship can have no more than three Consequences total regardless of the type of track the Consequence was on: Frame, Data, or Heat. The actual Consequence is named by the defender.

A Consequence is also an Aspect and can be free-tagged (once) by any opponent at any time after it is applied, and tagged or compelled as usual thereafter.

Once the number of shifts has been modified by Consequences, the corresponding box on the specified stress track is marked and so are all open boxes below it. If the highest box marked has already been marked, mark the next higher open box. If you must mark a box off the high end of the stress track, the ship is Taken Out.

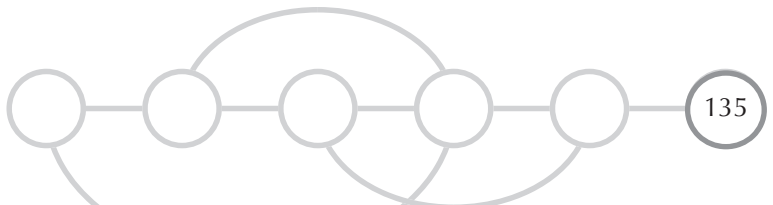
Unlike Consequences, the attacker narrates the final state of the defeated ship (exploding in a blaze of glory; empty derelict; captured), subject of course to final approval by the referee. This may be a reason for the crew to voluntarily take themselves out before it comes to this, either by surrendering, agreeing to a tether, or jumping into the lifeboats!

This also means a ship can be Taken Out without ever taking a Consequence and therefore without ever taking any serious damage! A ship that takes eight shifts more than its Frame stress track cannot be saved. This is the canonical piracy success: the winner chooses to narrate the Taken Out result as surrender and an undamaged ship is captured.

If the relevant conditions are met, being Taken Out may also include an enforced Tether as a step towards coupling (see Special Maneuvers below). Ships that are Taken Out may not be used for positioning advantage in subsequent turns: it is usually best simply to remove the counter from the map.

Consequences can be compelled, tagged, or invoked just like any other Aspect. Their description is up to the controlling player but must obviously appear to be negative and meet with the table’s approval as a suitable description of the effects on the vessel. And remember, if you forced the Consequence you can tag it once for free!

Remember that at any time during the fight but before damage is marked, any spacecraft owner may negotiate a concession rather than play out.



6. space combat

recovering stress box hits

From the highport lounge, you can look out to the ships docked around the facility. They're beautiful, their wings extended to bleed off heat, glowing orange or red. Like butterflies, frozen in time, pinned against the blackness of space. The wings aren't strong enough to work under thrust—when flying it's always crucial to maintain perfect symmetry along the ship's axis—but when they pause, and hold their breath, they extend their wings and remind me of the angels.

Stress box hits are not real damage. They are alarms going off, rattled crew, shrapnel dinging off the hull, shutting down non-essential systems, blowing air to avoid explosive decompression, and so on. Nothing that can't be fixed with a tiny amount of downtime and nothing that actually affects performance.

Remember that Heat track hits may be cleared by not using drives for a turn. Each turn that the V-shift is not engaged allows the highest filled box in the Heat track to be cleared.

All stress box hits are cleared at the first instance of downtime, whether that's time in dock or just the time in transit to the slipstream.

recovering consequences

In calculating time to repair, there are two scales that must be kept in mind. First, is in-game time. Repairs take time, and this has to be modeled somehow. More important, however, is living with the repercussions of a space combat in real time, from the player's perspectives. While clearing a mild Consequence is possible right after combat, and a moderate Consequence can be repaired with any respectable facility, severe Consequences should be felt by the players; they should realize that they have seriously hurt their ship. Consequently, the soonest that a serious Consequence can be removed is at the end of the session following the one when it was received: players must carry the effects of severe damage for at least one full session in addition to the session the damage is received, during which time the Consequence should be continually compelled by the referee if the ship is being used.

A mild Consequence can be repaired by an engineer or computer expert (depending on the type of Consequence) without a roll after the combat scene is over.

A moderate Consequence remains until the engineer or computer expert can make a successful check against difficulty zero. Base time for repairs is a week with (positive or negative) shifts modifying the time to repair by one per shift. It requires docking at a repair facility within one technology rating of the ship. If the only repair facility available is of an inappropriate technology rating, treat the Consequence as Severe for repair purposes.

A severe Consequence can be repaired by an engineer or computer expert against a difficulty four. It requires docking at a repair facility within one technology rating of the ship (though the referee may decide that the facility is, despite technology, better or worse equipped to repair the vessel and apply this as a modifier to the difficulty). Repairing a severe Consequence also forces an extra maintenance check. Regardless of when the maintenance work is done, the Consequence is only removed at the end

of the session after which it was received. (If the referee needs a guideline for the time of repairs, he may say it takes one month, modified by the number of shifts achieved; such time pressures, however, do not outweigh the need for the severe Consequence to be borne for a full session).

Example: Alice's T2 ship has survived combat, barely, but all three Consequences have been taken on the Frame. The mild is automatically repaired after combat as she has an engineer—if she didn't she'd have to hire one. The ship has limped to a facility in a heliocentric position near the slipstream point of a T3 system and the engineer (with Engineer 2) goes to work.

First she fixes the moderate: she rolls for a total of 5. Against a difficulty zero that's 5 shifts, so the repairs take only an hour (a week on the time track shifted up (quicker!) 5 places).

After the easier fix she tackles the severe Consequence: the difficulty is 4. She rolls for a total of 2. Against difficulty 4 that's -2 shifts, so these repairs are going to take a whole season. That's too long for Alice, so she spends a fate point, tagging the ship's Aspect "Cluttered with spare parts," reducing it to a month.

At this point, the players will want to decide whether to head to a more competent facility for repairs or wait the time. The engineer might want to spend some fate points. Regardless, the roll stands: even if they slip their broken ship to a better port, all they can do is modify the roll already made. Getting help from a better engineer can shift the roll by one place, but no one gets to re-roll (except as the result of a fate point spent on an appropriate Aspect of course).

The players may decide simply to wait it out; there's plenty to do planetside, and at the end of the month, the ship can fly. Alice makes the extra maintenance roll to repair the severe Consequence, and so all is well. The Consequence, however, will not actually be removed from the ship's sheet until the end of the next session's play. If Alice wants to go back in space, she needs to endure the negative effects of the Consequence.

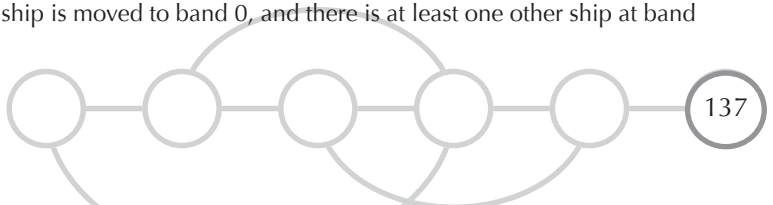
special maneuvers

formation flying

Formation flying is a means of keeping two ships in the same range band at all times. Ships in formation may not be separated by the positioning rolls of another ship. This allows a merchant to fly with an escort, for example, or a fleet of fighters to maintain a common range for their attacks.

Ships may begin combat in formation. During set-up in the detection phase, any two ships (or more) in the same band may (but need not) be in formation, if the players controlling the ships so choose. Models are pressed next to each other to represent this.

Ships may enter formation with one another during the positioning phase. In the turn in which any ship is moved to band 0, and there is at least one other ship at band



6. space combat

0, the ship entering the band may enter formation with another ship.

Each pilot makes a roll, but the formation moves based on the lowest roll. If repositioned by another ship, the formation is moved as a unit. Ships in formation may only move as fast as the V-shift of the slowest ship allows.

A ship may leave formation at any time during the positioning phase.

Formation flying allows all ships autonomy, but is more challenging to maintain than tethering in combat situations.

tethering

Tethering offers increased performance for ships in formation, at the expense of some autonomy for vessels. Tethering need not be physical, and any viable picture may be used to describe it: slaving the computer, perhaps; tethering could also be useful for slipping (“Convoy”). Two (or more) ships in formation may be said to be tethered, if one of the two following conditions are met: either both ships agree to be tethered and one agrees to lead, or one ship wishes to tether and lead and the other has been Taken Out with a compatible narrated result.

There is always a primary ship when ships are tethered; one leads the other (or others). Multiple ships may be said to be tethered together, but only one can be leading. Only fate points from the lead ship can be spent while ships are tethered. As with formation flying, models are pressed together, but tethered ships gain the temporary Aspect “Tethered.” Tethered ships may not fire on other ships within their formation. They may be disengaged at any point, but only at the discretion of the leader. In the positioning phase, only the leader makes a piloting roll. Tethered ships may only move as fast as the V-shift of the slowest ship, and may not initiate a burn.

boarding

In any turn, individuals from a lead ship may board any ship to which it is tethered. At this point, the game would normally revert to the individual tactical game: characters fight boarders! See Chapter 5, Personal Combat.

However, boarding can be addressed within the space combat game with an opposed roll, where any positive result for the boarders indicates the boarding action to be successful by the end of the following turn. Relevant Aspects include “Boarding crew,” “Bunch of thugs,” “Tight security,” or “Elite marines,” but not “Tethered.” Ties favour the defending ship, however, and any ship that withstands a boarding party for three turns has repelled the boarders, and is no longer tethered. If it was tethered as a result of being Taken Out, it remains Taken Out, but requires new narration, this time provided by the defender (since he succeeded in repelling boarders). (These rules could also become applicable if the players stumble onto a boarding situation, or are asked to escort a target ship that is then attacked by pirates: the pirates board the target, while the characters in their ship maneuver about).

coupling

All ships have a nose coupling mechanism which may be attached to the base of the mast of any one other ship and can be used to tow (or, actually, push) the other ship. The coupled ship must be Taken Out or tethered, and need not have a working drive.

Two coupled ships move at the lead ship's V-shift rating -2. The lead ship gains the temporary Aspect "Slow to respond," and the coupled ship's counter is removed from the map: the coupled ship may not fire weapons or take any other actions in the space combat game until it is decoupled. Ships couple or decouple during the positioning phase as an action. If ships decouple, the lead ship loses its temporary Aspect and regains full use of its V-shift, and a counter is placed on the current range band to represent the decoupled ship. Derelicts are not placed on the map.

wargaming

The courier's mayday came in as soon as we left slipstream. Condensation on the interior walls of our ship let us know that the heat sinks were at capacity, but there wouldn't be time to bleed all that heat if we were to help the courier. So we had a choice. Wait it out, and hope that the pirate would take his time in hopes of swallowing the courier whole while our sinks cooled the ship, radiating our accumulated energy off into space, or fighting right away, and hoping that we just didn't need to push our engines too much. Cassie announced that she had a lock, that she could compensate for the divergent vectors. Our gunner's a math genius, you see; she's always finding a way to make a spectacular, improbable shot that she could brag about for days. "Torpedo launch...", said the Captain, as Cassie released the volley into the black of space. The Captain continued, under his breath, "Let's make this our fight."

This combat Sequence is presented in a form sufficient to play independently as a wargame. The core design philosophy that makes this a wargame is that the combat is chiefly between spacecraft. That is, rolls are based on ship statistics (which function as analogues of Skills) and ship Aspects are invoked, tagged, and compelled. The role of individuals, even player characters, is for the most part ancillary to actual combat.

When playing this mini-game as part of a role-playing game, however, the range of action for players extends to their characters and the spaceships in play. Specifically, at any point in the combat Sequence, players should feel free to have their characters do things to influence events. Chiefly this will be a maneuver—a Skill check, possibly opposed, intended to place a free-taggable Aspect on an enemy vessel. This is not part of the combat Sequence because it depends on the creativity and judgment of the players rather than on a strict application of rules, and consequently sits firmly in the space of the role-playing game, with final authority residing with the table, the caller, or perhaps the referee as appropriate.

As a stand-alone game, ships can be pitted against one another, without the need for player characters. Ships may be drawn from the lists below, or may be designed from scratch. Assuming ships all have standard (default) crews (*i.e.* they do not possess the Stunt, "Skeleton Crew"), any of the following basic scenarios should be playable:

- Duel: two ships at identical technology levels attempt to take each other out.
- Border Patrol: T3 civilian ship seeks to escape two T2 military ships.
- Pirate Attack: T2 ship attempts to take out another T2 ship which may not fire until the pirate has fired or initiated EW.
- Smuggling: T2 civilian ship seeks to escape T2 military ship.

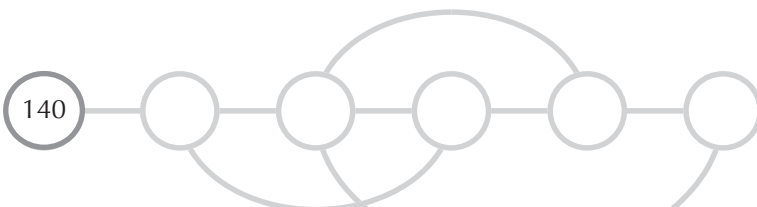
6. space combat

aspects and fate points

Each ship should have five Aspects, revealed to all at the table, which need not be the Aspects given in the ship list. Each ship also begins with five fate points.

crew

All crew positions are assumed to start at Skill level 2. Pilot is not automatically raised to match the V-shift. Players may spend additional points to raise the Skill level of a given crew position. Ships receive between three and six points to spend: the base is 3. Add 1 for T3 vessels. Add two if the ship is military (all ships are military unless they have the Civilian Stunt). Points may be spent to raise the value of the crew position by one or to make a Skill Military-grade (most often with Pilot or Communications on military ships).



sample spacecraft

T3 Kestrel Class Interceptor

The sight of an Interceptor above the ecliptic guarding a convoy or leading an invasion sends pirates behind the nearest stellar body in the hopes of finding easier, less dangerous prey. The combination of speed and monstrous battery of torpedo tubes lets the Interceptor pin its prey at long ranges and extreme vector differences without losing contact, dropping salvo upon salvo against any foe. Flight is always the safer option for foes of the Interceptor. Not that running is going to be an easy task.

V-shift 4, Beam 0, Torpedo 5, EW 0, Trade 0

Frame OOO O

Data OOO

Heat OOO OOO

Slipdrive: can traverse slipstreams.

Firewall: base 2 defense against EW.

Vector randomizer: base 2 defense against beam.

High capacity magazine: never "Out of ammo".

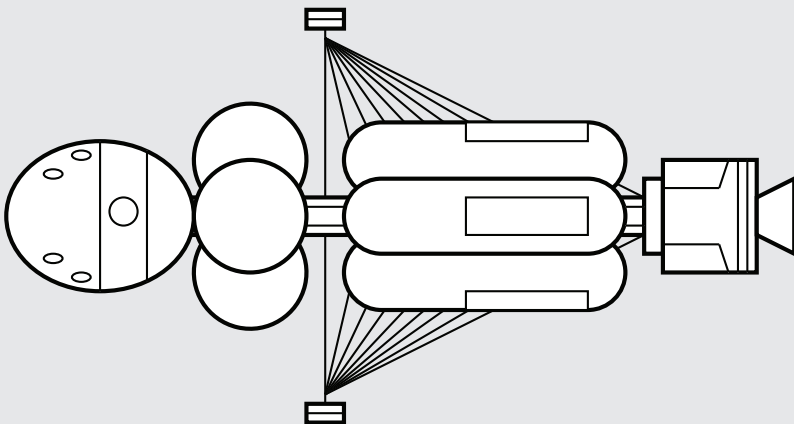
Fragile

Behind a wall of torpedoes

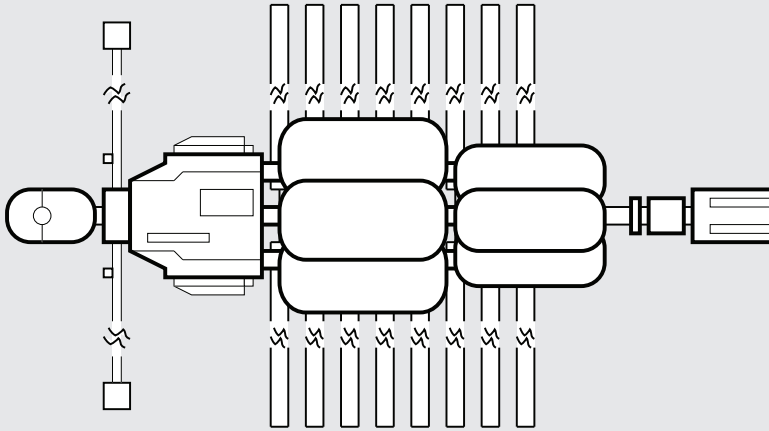
Stop in the name of the law

Hard to control

Defender



6. space combat



T3 Myriad Class Forward Refinery

The Myriad class spacecraft was designed for exploitation of the outer planets in foreign systems. It has two gigs that perform basic ore extraction and which can land and take off from planets. These gigs deliver to an automated refinery system, which conveys refined ingots to main storage. The vessel is designed for long missions and includes two “vacation” crew compartments that can be extended on 400 meter cables and spun to provide up to a half gravity. Normally these would be fitted with gym equipment and other facilities considered a luxury in space travel. Getting to and from the bays is accomplished by an elevator system that traverses from the main life support module to the spun gravity modules.

Because all extant Myriads are old now, the complicated vacation bay system is often disabled and permanently clamped to the main life support module.

Special rules: the Myriad class gets its full Trade value only when it is operating as a refinery. When operating as a cargo hauler its Trade value goes down to 3. If operating as both cargo and passenger system, and has its gravity module still working, it operates at Trade 4.

V-shift 3, Beam 0, Torpedo 0, EW 0, Trade 5

Frame 000 0

Data 000

Heat 000 000

Civilian: can be piloted without military training.

Slipdrive: can traverse slipstreams.

Interface Vehicle: has a separate vehicle capable of landing on planet surfaces.

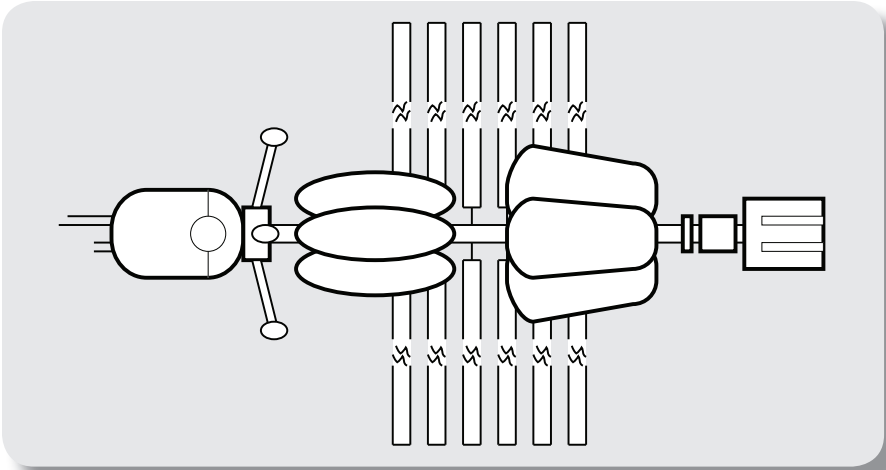
Cargo hauler

Fragile (lots of heat sinks)

Not all these parts are factory spec

Most of this ship isn't essential

Super efficient power system



T3 Ephemera Class Patrol Cruiser

The Ephemera class is designed to keep the peace, which largely involves threatening lower technology spacecraft with destruction should they interfere with “legal” police operations, like mining everything valuable in the system. As its primary use is patrol and escort, its systems are largely defensive but they are very powerful offensive military vessels, easily outclassing anything built at a lower technology level.

They are expensive to maintain, having no real cargo space and composed of parts and materials that may be beyond the typical owner’s home technology to replace.

V-shift 4, Beam 4, Torpedo 0, EW 4, Trade 0

Frame 000

Data 000

Heat 000 00

Slipdrive: can traverse slipstreams.

Vector randomizer: base defense 2 against beams.

Overwatch: may use its beam in defense of friendly vessels.

To serve and protect

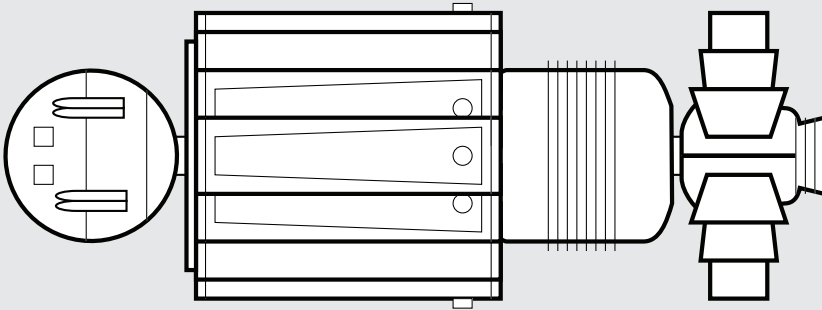
Not always what it seems

Baffling high technology drives

Costly

Some parts left over after maintenance

6. space combat



T2 Rah-Kash-Ka Fierce Trader

In the culture of the People, violence is not unusual. In fact it's really just a normal part of business. Consequently most merchant vessels designed before the Attachment are fairly heavily armed. As the People get used to human space, however, new ships are supplanting these "Fierce Traders" and the military variant is deployed as an escort to unarmed cargo haulers.

V-shift 3, Beam 2, Torpedo 2, EW 0, Trade 3

Frame 000

Data 000

Heat 000

Firewall: base defense 2 against EW.

Civilian: can be piloted without military training.

Slipdrive: can traverse slipstreams.

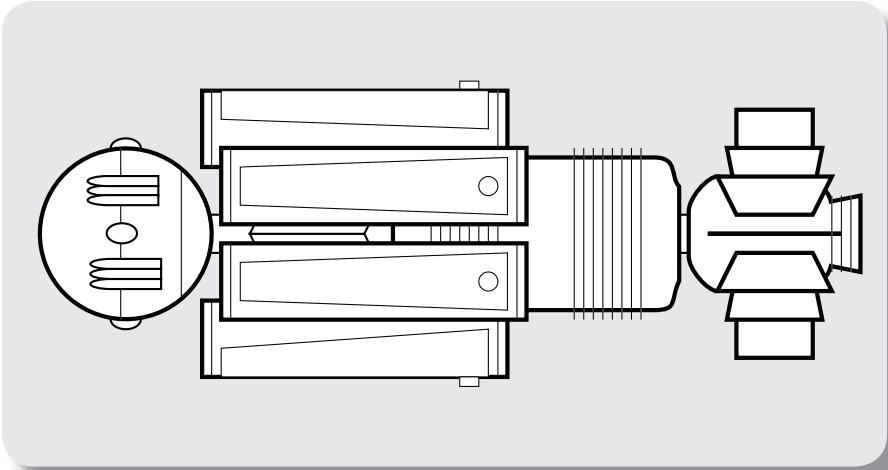
Sometimes trade involves take

If it cannot run and it cannot fight then it is food

Modular, easy to understand components

Out of ammo

There's no word for "pirate" in this tongue—only "merchant"



T2 Peh-Nak-Tah Export Slipper

Designed by the People for export to human worlds, the Penakta (human transliteration) class slipstream vessel is a multi-purpose hull that is reasonably well suited to most purposes but is not quite up to the same quality standards as those ships designed for use by the People. As usual, the People cannot really conceive of a merchant vessel that cannot fight, and so the Penakta typically mounts a low-quality missile launch system that is trivially refitted with state of the art terminally guided ammunition, making it genuinely dangerous.

V-shift 2, Beam 0, Torpedo 2, EW 0, Trade 4

Frame OOO O

Data OOO

Heat OOO

Civilian: can be piloted without military training.

Slipdrive: can traverse slipstreams.

Cheap: made from inferior materials (no mechanical effect).

Quality control stamp missing

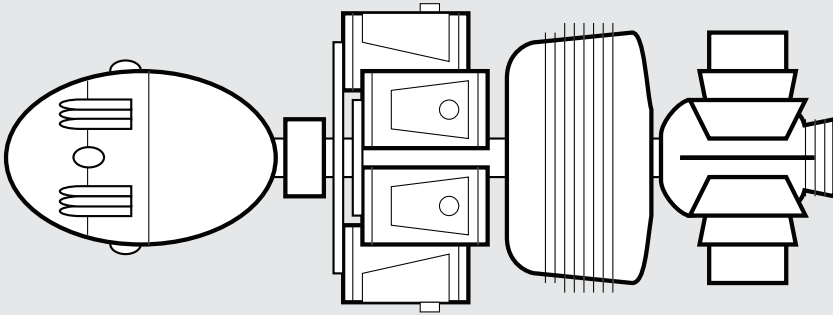
Built for humans by lizards

Out of ammo

Huge

Cargo hauler

6. space combat



T2 Rah-Aro-Ka Fierce Escort

When Gareth and his brother Tristan first captured their "Fierce Trader," they saw the advantages of the alien design. It was when they finally captured an Escort, though, that they came to understand how balancing trade and violence could really be profitable. Since then a number of independent traders have found that appropriating the alien technology can yield jump-capable profits. Trade and violence, it turns out, are connected.

V-shift 3, Beam 3, Torpedo 3, EW 0, Trade 1

Frame 000

Data 000

Heat 000

Slipdrive: can traverse slipstreams.

Overwatch: may use its beam in defense of friendly vessels.

Firewall: base defense 2 against EW.

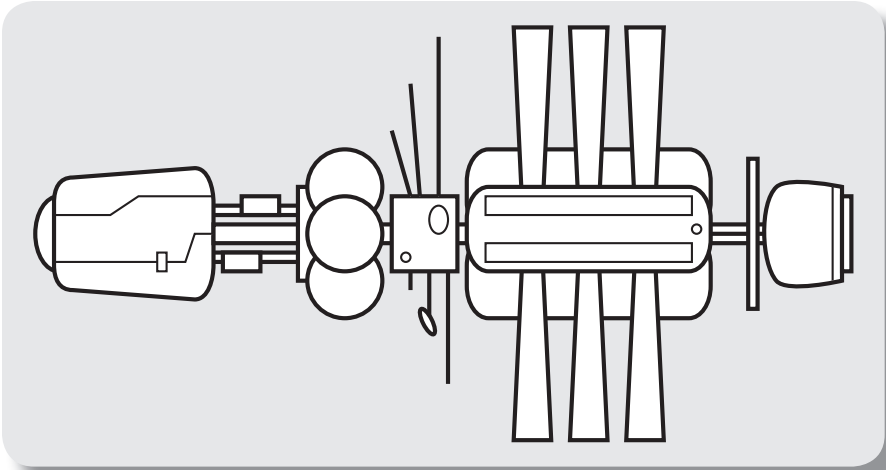
Defending our weak and delicious friends

It is sad to carry no valuable cargo

Modular, easy to understand components

Gets pretty warm in here

Out of ammo



T2 Electronic Warfare Platform

When one of these cerebral beasts slips into a system it can only mean dire consequences for the planetary inhabitants. Often the first ship through the slip-knot it frequently goes undetected due to the advanced electronics that permeate the vessel. Crews of these ships have a high mortality rate when flying solo but their effects on a system's defenses can be catastrophic. Used to block and disrupt and confuse an enemy's electronics, these ships can take out convoys and never fire a shot. In the hands of a skilled pilot and brilliant hacker these vessels strike fear into the souls of the bravest warriors.

The EWP is also occasionally deployed as an escort for high ranking diplomats. Especially those with enemies behind every moon.

V-shift 2, Beam 0, Torpedo 0, EW 4, Trade 1

Frame 000

Data 000 0

Heat 000 00

Slipdrive: can traverse slipstreams.

Vector randomizer: base defense 2 against beam.

Point defense: base defense 2 against torpedo.

Fragile

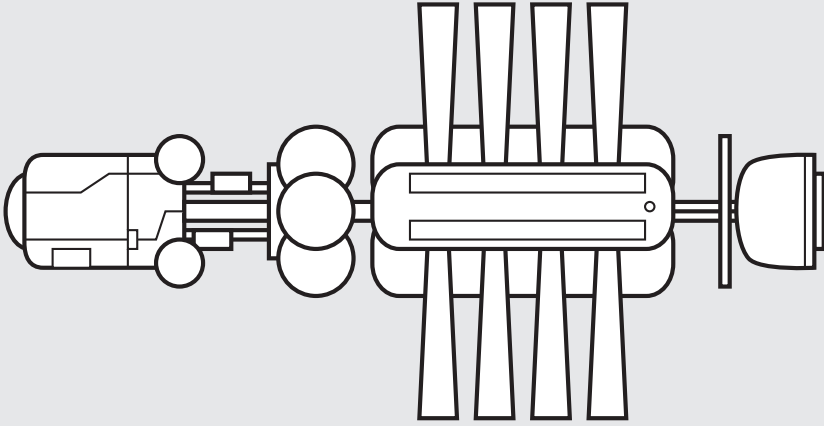
Wild weasel

In harm's way

Hacker's dream job

We are the static on your radar screen

6. space combat



T2 Belinda Class Escort Gunship

Designed to operate with the Wild Weasel in patrol and offensive operations, the Escort gunship is equipped with several high energy particle weapons and shorter range coilguns that can coordinate with friendly vessels to provide anti-missile fire in a broad range of circumstances. When paired with a Wild Weasel, this presents a lethal problem for any miscreant to solve, with the Wild Weasel standing off at longer ranges conducting destructive electronic warfare while the escort combines its point defense overwatch duties with the occasional offensive blast from short range.

V-shift 3, Beam 4, Torpedo 0, EW 0, Trade 0

Frame 000 0

Data 000

Heat 000 0

Firewall: base defense 2 against EW.

Vector randomizer: base defense 2 against beam.

Overwatch: can fire beam in defense of other ships.

Slipdrive: can traverse slipstreams.

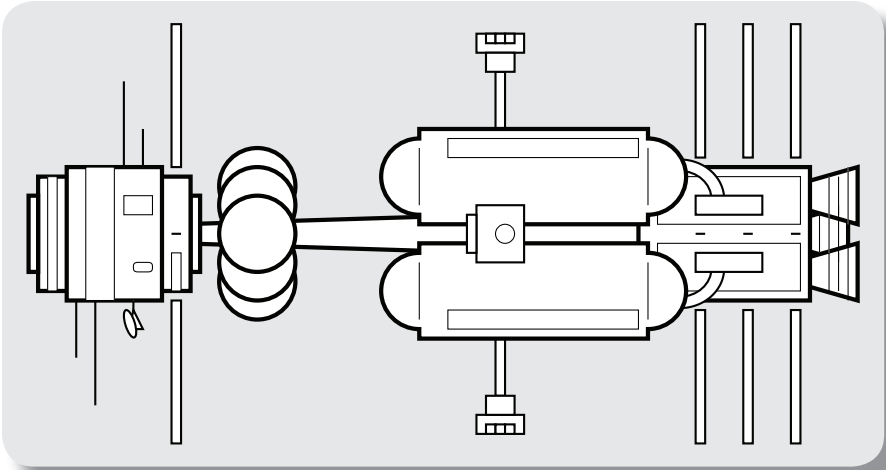
Fragile

Dangerous friend

Standing in the line of fire

Defensive weaponry

Pirates beware



T1 Oberon System Defender

The Oberon is more of an announcement than a warship. It was designed to provide a military capability against higher technology cultures invading with the intent to mine the system. As such, though it expects to be outclassed technologically, it also expects to be dealing with vessels optimised for trade and not combat. This is a classic system patrol monitor, designed to support drone bombardment with effective electronic warfare. Tactically, it is a wholly offensive platform.

V-shift 1, Beam 0, Torpedo 3, EW 3, Trade 0

Frame 000

Data 000

Heat 000

Defending the homeland

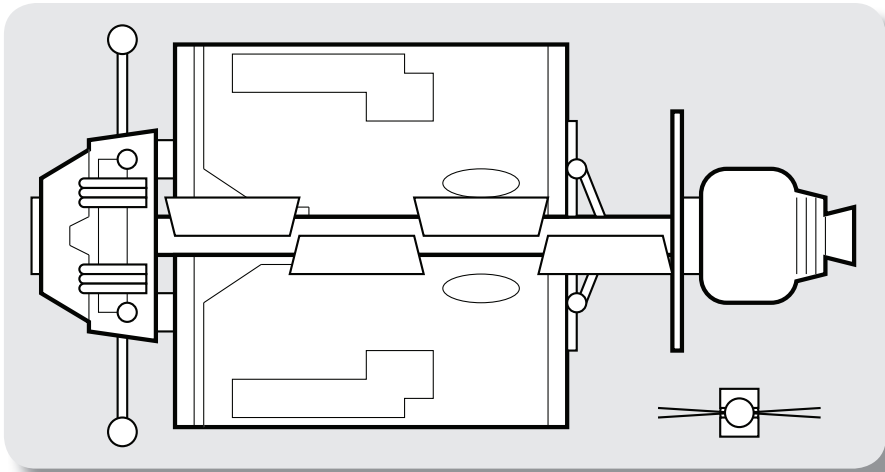
A storm of drones

Experimental warfare methods

Out of ammo

Built to last

6. space combat



T1 Princess Liner

Many systems have only their environment to generate commerce, and these systems need a way to transport rich tourists from garden world to garden world. The Princess Liner is typical of the trade. It's huge and it's ugly and it's slow, but it moves people with efficiency and comfort.

V-shift 1, Beam 0, Torpedo 0, EW 0, Trade 3

Frame OOO O

Data OOO

Heat OOO

Civilian: can be piloted without military training.

Interface vehicle: has a separate vehicle capable of landing on planet surfaces.

Huge

Passenger liner

A sitting duck

Proudly built by local unions

It's sure nice to get back to solid ground

T3 Registered Interdiction Trader

A fast high-technology vessel designed to trade in dangerous space. It might be found running guns through blockads or in regions with a high rate of piracy.

V-shift 3, Beam 3, Torpedo 3, EW 3, Trade 4

Frame OOO O

Data OOO

Heat OOO

Civilian: can be piloted without military training.

Slipdrive: can traverse slipstreams.

Interface vehicle: has a separate vehicle capable of landing on planet surfaces.

Trading in hostile space

Not so easy prey

Out of ammo

We don't negotiate with terrorists

Cargo hauler

T3 Scout Hunter

This craft is designed as a privateer that can sustain itself for long stretches moving small cargos while watching for enemy vessels. In the event of trouble it can escape or scramble enemy transmissions.

V-shift 4, Beam 1*, Torpedo 1*, EW 4, Trade 2

*Effective level 2 with default crew.

Frame OOO

Data OOO O

Heat OOO O

Vector randomizer: defense 2 vs. Beam.

Civilian: can be piloted without military training.

T3 Slipdrive: can traverse slipstreams.

Interface Vehicle: has a separate vehicle capable of landing on planet surfaces.

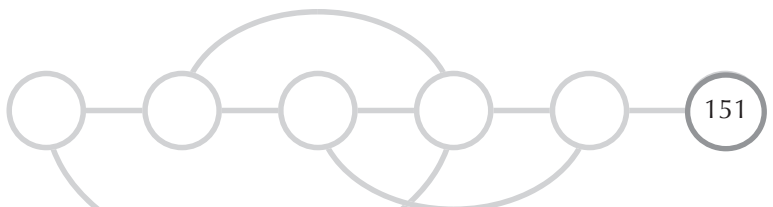
Extensive sensor array

Waits in silence

Out of ammo

The manual is not in English

"That lever always sticks."



6. space combat

T2 Blockade Runner

Built to run illegal cargo past border patrol vessels, the blockade runner is fast but fragile. It sports an enormous heat exchanger.

V-shift 4, Beam 0, Torpedo 0, EW 0, Trade 3

Frame OO

Data OO

Heat OOO OOO O

Point defense: base defense 2 against torpedoes.

Slipdrive: can traverse slipstreams.

Fragile

Cargo hauler

Desperate burn to escape

Illegal cargo

Low on r-mass

T2 Courier

A basic small cargo mover equipped with civilian weapons.

V-shift 2, Beam 2, Torpedo 0, EW 2, Trade 2

Frame OOO

Data OOO

Heat OOO OO

Slipdrive: can traverse slipstreams.

Civilian: can be piloted without military training.

Vector randomizer: base defense 2 against beam.

Fragile

The mail must go through

Small

Cargo hauler

Your secret is safe with us

T2 ECM Gunboat

Sometimes you want to take out the enemy without hurting anyone, and the ECM Gunboat is just the tool. It has an effective EW system and its torpedo system fires comm drones that scramble communications and deploy hostile software.

V-shift 2, Beam 0, Torpedo 3, EW 3, Trade 0

Frame OOO

Data OOO O

Heat OOO

Slipdrive: can traverse slipstreams.

Point defense: base defense 2 against torpedoes.

Attack a different track: Torpedo attacks damage Data instead of the Frame.

Electromagnetic pulse weapons

*Out of ammo
No one gets hurt
Every surface is an antenna
Nowhere to hide*

T2 Modular Cargo Hauler

Some cargo is not worth holding on to, and this vessel is built with that in mind. At the least sign of trouble, the crew can eject the cargo module and escape the scene at a very high delta-v. Preferred by slavers everywhere.

V-shift 2, Beam 2, Torpedo 0, EW 0, Trade 4
Frame OOO O
Data OOO
Heat OOO

Civilian: can be piloted without military training.

Slipdrive: can traverse slipstreams.

Firewall: base defense 2 against EW.

Modal: Jettison modular cargo and stats become V-shift 4, Trade 0, and it gets +1 Heat box. Maintenance checks are made based on the current configuration. May return to cargo configuration after a maintenance check.

*All cargo is expendable
Save our skins
Unexpected burst of speed
Plenty more space back there
Can't make money dead*

T2 Personal Starship

Sometimes you just want to get away from it all.

V-shift 3, Beam 0, Torpedo 2, EW 0, Trade 2
Frame OOO OO
Data OOO
Heat OOO

Civilian: can be piloted without military training.

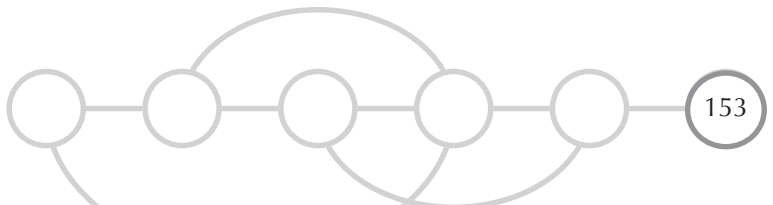
Slipdrive: can traverse slipstreams.

Skeleton crew: can be piloted with as few as one crew member.

Interface Vehicle: has a separate vehicle capable of landing on planet surfaces.

Firewall: base defense 2 against EW.

*The freedom of solitude
Navigating by the stars
Every single control within reach of one seat
Walnut and brass
Nautical tradition*



6. space combat

T2 Generic Hauler

When you need to get stuff from A to B, this is the cheapest way to do it.

V-shift 2, Beam 0, Torpedo 0, EW 0, Trade 3

Frame OOO

Data OOO

Heat OOO

Civilian: can be piloted without military training.

Slipdrive: can traverse slipstreams.

Skeleton crew: can be piloted with as few as one crew member.

Firewall: base defense 2 against EW.

Vector randomizer: base defense 2 against beam.

Point defense: base defense 2 against torpedoes.

Cheap

Steers like a cow

Heavily automated

Please move to the back

Options: Choose one aspect: for moving van, take "Cargo hauler." For bus, take "Passenger liner"

T1 Missile boat

The missile boat is the mainstay of system defense fleets for cultures that do not yet have the capability for interstellar travel. It is heavily armoured and able to inflict substantial harm even on more advanced vessels.

V-shift 2, Beam 0, Torpedo 3, EW 0, Trade 0

Frame OOO OO

Data OOO

Heat OOO

High capacity magazine: never "Out of ammo."

Huge

Fragile

Fire and forget

Heavy armour

Nuclear warheads

T1 Anomaly Class Lab Vessel

Autonomous sensor drones, nuclear seismic charges, x-ray lasers, and powerful computers are all dangerous in the hands of a motivated scientist.

V-shift 1, Beam 2, Torpedo 2, EW 2, Trade 2

Frame OO

Data OOO

Heat OO
Out of ammo
For science!
Government lasers are pretty good it turns out
Powerful automation
Efficient use of space

T0 Flying Laser

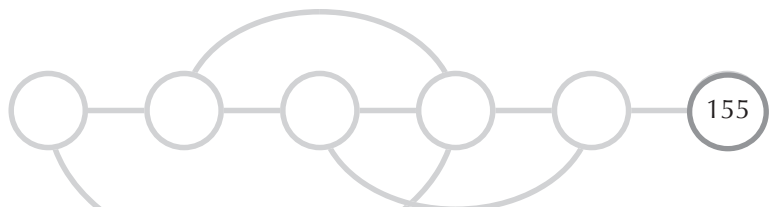
A low-technology warship mounting the most effective energy weapons available. Very fragile.

V-shift 2, Beam 2, Torpedo 0, EW 0, Trade 0
Frame OO
Data O
Heat OOO
Fragile
Huge
Stripped the armour to make the beam hot
Arcane computer systems
Defending the high ground

T-1 Explorer

This is the basic science vessel of a newly space-faring culture.

V-shift 1, Beam 0, Missile 0, EW 0, Trade 0
Frame OO
Data O
Heat O
Extended range: can use the extended range column of the travel tables.
Huge
Fragile
Science mission
We come in peace!
Software archaeologists



space combat play sheet

0. detection

1. Caller announces "Detection" and asks for compels.
2. Navigation roll determines position for each ship (roll at most once per ship)
 - a. Roll and add Skill.
 - b. Resolve tags and invokes.
3. Highest roll places any two ships on bands between 3 and -3.
4. Subsequent rolls place one ship each.
5. Lowest roll places nothing.
6. Winner of detection phase decides to move (for this turn only) to phase 1 or phase 2. If there is no winner then always continue to phase 1.

1. position

1. Caller announces "Position" and asks for compels.
2. Ship's V-shift roll, limited by effective Pilot Skill, determines who wins position. A ship declaring no V-shift (compelled or recovering Heat) gets an automatic result of -4.
 - a. Roll and add Skill.
 - b. Resolve tags and invokes.
 - c. Apply spin if desired.
 - d. Apply burn if desired.
3. Highest roll may move his vessel the number of shifts between his roll and the lowest (to a maximum number of bands equal to the V-shift rating of his own ship) or another vessel the number of shifts between his roll and the target vessel's roll (again, to a maximum number of bands equal to the winner's V-shift rating).
4. A ship that has not applied V-shift for any reason may erase the highest checked box on its heat track.

2. electronic warfare

1. Caller announces "EW" and asks for compels.
2. Caller asks for ships to declare targets.
3. Caller announces target declaration is closed.
4. Ship's EW roll, amplified by the communication officer's effective Communications Skill.
 - a. Roll and add Skill.
 - b. Leave all dice on the table (since the single defensive roll applies to all attacks).
 - c. Resolve tags and invokes.
 - d. Apply spin if desired.
5. For each ship that declared a target, compare offense and defense roll and count shifts.
 - a. Negative shifts are applied as damage to the attacker's Data stress track.
 - b. Positive shifts are applied as damage to the defender's Data stress track.
 - c. Wherever a defender succeeded by three or more, spin is awarded to the defender.

3. beam weapons

1. Caller announces “Beams” and asks for compels.
2. Caller asks for ships to declare beam targets.
3. Caller announces target declaration is closed.
4. Ship’s Beam roll from 1 to a maximum of the Beam rating for each ship that declared a beam target, amplified by the gunnery officer’s effective Gunnery Skill.
 - a. Defenders roll modifying a base defense of zero unless they have a Stunt providing better defense. If the defender has already rolled to defend against a Beam attack this round, use the recorded value.
 - i. Beams fired at range greater than 2 bands take a -2 penalty to the roll.
 - ii. Resolve tags and invokes. Do not modify previously recorded defensive rolls. Defensive rolls just made are modified and recorded with modifications.
 - iii. Apply spin if desired.
 - iv. If the attacker’s roll generates shifts, apply the number of shifts as a hit to the corresponding box on the Frame stress track and mark all boxes below as well.
 - v. Wherever a defender succeeded by three or more, spin is awarded.

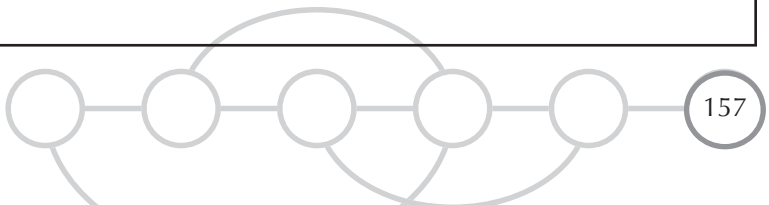
4. torpedoes

1. Caller announces “Torpedoes” and asks for compels.
2. Caller asks for ships to declare torpedo targets.
3. Caller announces target declaration is closed.
4. Ship’s Torpedo roll for each ship that declared a missile target, amplified by the gunnery officer’s effective Gunnery Skill.
 - a. Targets roll with zero Skill unless they have a Stunt providing better defense or, if they choose, defend with some fraction of their Beam rating. If the defender has already rolled to defend against a Torpedo attack this round, use the recorded value.
 - b. If the Beam rating applied offensively (in phase 3) + the Beam rating applied defensively exceeds the ship’s Beam rating, apply the difference as a hit to the corresponding box on the ship’s Heat stress track.
 - i. Torpedoes fired at a range less than 2 bands take a -2 penalty to the roll.
 - ii. Resolve tags and invokes.
 - iii. Apply spin if desired. Do not modify previously recorded defensive rolls. Defensive rolls just made are modified and recorded with modifications.
 - c. If the attacker’s roll generates shifts, apply the number of shifts as a hit to the corresponding box on the Frame stress track and mark all boxes below as well.
 - d. Wherever a defender succeeded by three or more, spin is awarded to the defender.

5. damage control

Engineering and Computer Skills can be used to effect repairs, to a maximum of one roll per ship for each of Frame and Data stress track repair. Repair rolls are considered simultaneous, and the same character may not attempt both rolls. The target for repair rolls is the highest marked box on the relevant track, and success is measured in shifts: players may erase all the boxes below the degree of success.

Repeat phases 1-5, as necessary.



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