

Abstract Book 2 Space Combat

by Paul Elliott

There was nothing really like Traveller's original ship combat rules, with its acceleration vectors and computer-programming-on-the-fly. For me, though, the novelty was soon replaced with the burning desire to get on with the story and find out how it all ends. One screenwriter in Hollywood is a critic of the car chase, describing it as a gap in the plot, a gaping hole that leaves the audience waiting for the outcome. I'd been wanting to plug Traveller's 'plot gap' for years, but only recently come around to the task when I decided to jump into a Book 1, 2 and 3 only, universe.

The system I developed is an abstraction of the Book 2 space combat rules as they stand. An important point to make is that it leaves the starship construction rules unchanged; any book 2 design can participate in these abstract combats quite easily. I wanted to know very quickly, 'who wins?' without deciding which programs to feed into the computer, or which turrets should fire on which targets. There involves a short assessment procedure for any participating craft which assigns each a number, a Combat Rating (CR).

Assessment Table	
1-2G Drive	+1
3G Drive	+2
4 G Drive	+3
5-6G Drive	+4
Small Craft Weapons	+1
Single Turrets	+1
Double Turrets	+2
Triple Turrets	+3
Equal or Over 10 Turrets	+2
Equal or Over 20 turrets	+4
Equal or Over 30 turrets	+6
Equal or Over 40 turrets	+8
No Sandcasters	-1
Computer 4+	+2
Computer 6+	+3
Computer 7	+4

Assess

First assess the spacecraft to create a single Combat Rating (CR). This assessment is designed to provide a rough guide to the power and potential combat ability of a starship, not to track every weapon and fitting. Assessment can be done following construction, with the CR written down on the construction sheet. Please resist the temptation to look at the 'break points' in the Assessment Table and go on to design ships from there, angling to gain the maximum number of bonuses. The CR is a 'rough guide' and should be done after construction. Always +3 to the final total to create the Combat Rating. The lowest possible CR for an undamaged craft should therefore be 3.

Avoiding a Fight

If one ship wishes to avoid a fight then it may attempt escape to beyond long range. Roll 10+ every *turn* to succeed. Add +2 if higher G rating than the pursuer; +4 if the G rating is twice as high; -2 if the pursuer has a G rating twice as high or more, than the evader.

Combat

In each 10 minute round all participants get one attack. It is the ship with the highest CR that goes first. When ships engage in combat, the attacker (on a round by round basis) must compare his CR to the CR of his target. This comparison gives a target number that must be rolled equal to or above, and if successful a hit (or hits) is scored.

Once it is determined that a hit has been made, check the result of the target roll to see how much damage was done. The hit location table in Book 2 is used to determine damage. Ships take turns in trying to inflict damage on one another. An escape attempt can be made if

desired at the start of the next combat round. Remember that CR may change if a turret, computer or manoeuvre drive suffers damage.

Comparison Table	
Ratio	Target Number (2D)
Enemy CR Quadruple or Over Yours	12+
Enemy CR Triple or Over	11+
Enemy CR Double or Over	10+
Enemy CR Over Yours	8+
Enemy CR Equal to Yours	7+
Enemy CR Under Yours	6+
Enemy CR Half or Less	5+
Enemy CR 1/3 or Less	4+
Enemy CR ¼ or Less	3+

Ship Damage Table	
Target Roll	Damage Inflicted
Roll Target Number Exactly	1 hit
Roll 2 more	2 hits
Roll 3 more	3 hits
Roll 4 more	4 hits
Roll 5 more	6 hits
Roll 6 more	1 critical and 2 hits
Roll 7 more	1 critical and 4 hits
Roll 8 more	1 critical and 6 hits
Roll 9 more	2 criticals and 2 hits
Roll 10 more	2 criticals and 4 hits

The Three-Way Fight

When a ship is in combat with multiple foes then the outnumbered ship has to reduced its CR by 1 for every additional foe. The limit on how many foes can be engaged simultaneously is limited to *one half* of the computer number (round up).

Hit Location Tables

Use the Hit Location tables given in Book 2, with the following changes; Small Craft, Crew and Hull hits.

Small Craft: A cabin hit may injure crew. Everyone onboard rolls 1d6, if the result is 5 or 6, that person is badly wounded or killed. Three hits on a small craft cabin result in the craft's break up and destruction. Any critical result on a small craft indicates Explosion.

Crew: A crew hit indicates decompression, fires, hydrogen or powerplant leaks and, more likely, hypersonic fragmentation effects. Up to 1D-1 crew are injured and unable to help in the combat. The ship can only act next round if a 9+ saving throw is made on 2D. This roll can be attempted at the start of each rounds.

Hull: The hull is smashed, air lost, structure damaged and interior components disabled. Lose a corridor or two, plus one of the following:

1D	Hull Location Affected
1	Grav-plates are disabled
2	An airlock is destroyed
3	Life support fails in 1-3 rounds
4	Inertial compensators disabled. Limited to 1G acceleration (2G if military)
5	Comms disabled
6	Long-range sensors are disabled

<i>Sample Combat Ratings</i>	
Ship Type	CR
Scout/Courier (double turret)	4
Free Trader (double turret)	6
Subsidized Merchant (double turret)	6
Subsidized Liner (no turrets)	3
Yacht (no turrets)	3
Mercenary Cruiser (6x triple turrets)	9
Patrol Cruiser (4x triple turrets)	8
Leviathan Merchant Cruiser (6x double turrets, 3x triple turrets, 4xsingle turrets)	9
Kinunir Battle Cruiser (8xtriple laser, 2xtriple turrets)	14
Launch (3xweapons)	5
Fighter (3xweapons)	6
Cutter (3xweapons)	6
Aslan Escort (8xtriple turrets)	10
Aslan Cruiser (10xtriple turrets)	11
Zhodani Escort (6xtriple turrets) plus 2 fighters (CR 7)	10

Other rules

All other rules regarding detection, decompression, abandoning ship, damage control, repair parts and so forth can be used directly from Book 2 as required.

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