

The Basics of Space Warfare

This Manual is written for the [Abwehrran Armed Forces \(AAF\)](#), and details the basic strategies, and tactics used by the [abwehrran_star_empire](#) in space combat.

Introduction to Space Warfare

Space Warfare is often a confusing and stressful subject. Mistakes can quickly lead to destruction, death, and ultimate defeat – from the smallest craft to the greatest War Fleets, information is an essential part of their survival. Long before you ever see another ship, combat has begun. Sensors will often be the most effective way to detect enemy ships, and will usually be the only warning before munitions are impacting against the shields.

For ease of reading, and to more readily elaborate on the base elements of this subject, we have broken down this manual into separate sections.

Three Dimensional Warfare

Unlike ground warfare, and to insane extremes not found in sea or air, Space is infinite. In every direction, space goes on forever until the end of time. No matter how fast or far you travel you will never, ever reach the edge.

With that said, it's not far of a leap into infer that Space has no real “Up” or “Down”, and one of the first things to be taken out of mind is the concept of “Up” or “Down”. Typically, armed navies¹⁾ will have a preset 'plane' to go by, which is usually the imaginary line drawn through the closest Star's center and through the paths of orbiting bodies. This strategy eases the strain, and can 'allow' the concepts like “Above” and “Below”.

Stations and Stellar Bodies

Ten out of Ten engagements take place in Star Systems. Eight out of Ten engagements will take place near a planetary body. The remaining two are typically divided up between Space Stations, or other locations of interest within the star system.

Why, you may ask? Because there's simply nowhere else a fight could or should take place. There's nothing to defend or attack in Deep Space because there's nothing there. And so fighting only takes place in and around Stellar Bodies.

This doesn't mean you're fighting within combat range of the planet – a smart defender will try to fight you as far away from anything important as possibly to avoid accidental (or purposeful) bombardment. Usually, this means about four light-minutes' distance (half of one Astronomical Unit [AU])

Important things to remember about planets and stars is that Gravity is at play, even when you can't feel it. Going *toward* a large²⁾ object, is far easier than moving *away* from it. Taking this into account can give you a slight edge when using it to your advantage.

Also, objects large enough to be of interest have the ability to be an easy supply source when raided, boarded, or seized. While not always easy, it is a healthy thought to keep in mind when far from home, or low on supply.

Weapons and Ranges

Quite literally astronomical. Combatants can be so far apart from each other, that were there a window to look out from they wouldn't be able to see one another. The only forewarning ships – and by extension, fleets – is the information received beforehand and the information gathered through the sensors of ones' ship.

A bullet in space will travel forever until stopped by some outside force. Typically, that force is gravity, but the bullet has to hit *something*, *someday* to stop. Keep this in mind when firing munitions.

Weapons have ranges, and if you have information on just how far your opponents' weapons reach, you can use that to your advantage – Ships equipped with short-range weapons may be evaded, and attacked from a distance without the ability to form any effective response, for example. Of course, should that ship get into effective range...

How much damage weapons do compared to your own, how your armor or shields hold up, and how fast those weapons fire in comparison to your own is also valuable information.

Supplies

Supplies are critical to any unit, small or large. Any force without food and drink will break like sugar-glass when confronted with the enemy. Any force without ammunition to fire their weapons won't be very effective – or intimidating.

All units should be considered – from the sidearm of the lowliest technician to the greatest warship bristling with weapons. The ideal amount of ammunition should be enough to use the weapon in combat for one Abwehran Day.

The Knife-Fight

This is the point where ships are so close, someone could practically spit and hit something. Range simply doesn't matter anymore. It is also the point where chaos rules the battlefield. Formations are broken, ships are boarded and rammed, and panic can infect crew and captain alike like a virus.

When this occurs, the ability to control one's subordinates and ships is important. Plan this sort of

engagement beforehand, or make sure the enemy is too weak, disorganized, or demoralized to put up an effective fight.

If you aren't prepared for this, avoid it.

Maneuver

This section will deal with the movement of forces in a star system, and then finally when they meet.

Since the time where one primitive hit another with a club, one of war's many requirements was the speed of a force. For Defenders, it is the speed at which they can react to a threat. For the attacker, it is the speed at which they can overwhelm that reaction – preferably before the action is even taken.

In space, it isn't much different.

Defenders have the benefit of knowing where (not necessarily when) a battle will likely occur. But it is their speed that will win the day. Enemy forces would be able to bombard the objective if Defenders merely sat at the site that is the goal of the Attacker. Instead, they have to quickly react to the enemy threat and intercept them before they come into weapon's range of the objective.

Attackers have the benefit of choosing when and where the battle will occur, assuming they know both where the enemy is and where the objectives is.³⁾ But they must strike quickly, not giving the Defenders any extra time to prepare or gather strength.

Finally, when both forces do meet, several strategies are to be kept in mind for individual ships.

- Continue moving! A sitting duck is easily killed.
- Present your ship to best take advantage of firing arcs.⁴⁾
- Range is important – ships with reaching weapons can skirt the edge of the battle or lead the enemy on a merry chase without much danger so long as they remain outside of the *enemy's* range.
- Formations should work in concert, moving as one unit and possibly even firing as one unit.

Perception and Intelligence Gathering

A great part of any fight is what you think and know about the enemy, and what you think and know about yourself.

What people think of themselves (the unit or force) and the enemy, and what the enemy thinks about themselves and you, is described by 'morale'. Fear is a great weapon. Have you or other units beaten the enemy before? How many times? How badly? Have they beaten you? etc.

Fear is a great weapon, but it is a double-edged sword, it, and what you know of the enemy, will affect your decision making.

But the greatest weapon is knowledge, as they say. If you know when and where the enemy is arriving or coming from, you can set an ambush or otherwise prepare. If you know how many ships the enemy has,

who's leading them (how does he act? Is he aggressive? Let him break his back on your defenses. Is he cautious? Hound every weakness you can see. Is he a coward? Scare him with a grand display of power – smash his forces, come in from multiple angles.) and what supplies they're bringing (or where they're holding them) can give you the edge when coming up with a plan.

Offensive Strategies

In every campaign, there is an attacking army. Space is no different. Anyone who wishes to seize, raid, or destroy a position or object needs a plan.

Preparation

First, you need to prepare. How many rations will you need? How much ammo will you take? Crew? Ships? And above all: What is your plan?

The ideal plan will play to your advantages, and push at the enemy's weakness. This is where information is critical: What type of weapons does he use? Where is he? How many of them are there? These questions are very important, and the answers could lead you to find where the enemy is weak, or where you could use the appropriate tools⁵⁾ to counter his strengths.

Sometimes, when he outnumbers you, or he has the advantage (with technology, speed, surprise, or a well-defended position) it is best to avoid a fight, striking elsewhere or waiting until you can more easily assault his position.

The Dance

The Dance is named for what it would appear to be, were there no weapons. Ships gliding around each other, turning – violently, many times – and making wonderful patterns in response to one another.

It is the point where everything comes together, and where several factors may come together.

Surprise

Surprise is a potent weapon, and a great ally. Strike quickly, and without warning. Remove their ability to form a coherent defense by attacking from many directions, or from an unexpected one. Use cover – asteroids, radiation, moons, anything that could mask your signature on their sensors. Draw them out of position and bushwhack them. Harass supply lines or depots.

Perception

A great part of any fight is what you think about the enemy, and what you think about yourself. This is termed by the word 'morale'. The greatest weapon anyone can wield fear – if the enemy fears you, he won't want to fight you. His formations and ships may break and run.

But it is a double-edged sword, should you fear the enemy, your formations and ships may break and run. A good way to avoid this is to drill your forces, make them sure of their duties and make them learn how to perform those duties so well as to do them in their sleep. A good party, meeting, or plan can also help them keep it together in a fight.

The Assault

This is where all the forethought, planning, and effort ultimately lead. The Assault. Combat begins, ships are destroyed and people are killed. Staying in control, and being mindful of the enemy's movements at all times will help you win the battle.

Such tactics as focusing multiple ships' fire on one, closing the distance into Knife-Fight Range, targeting the enemy leaders or important ships, or performing complex maneuvers and formations can help decide the battle.

Defensive Strategies

At times, ships may be called to defend worlds and positions important to the Abwehrran Star Empire. This section will talk about a few things you should bear in mind when performing these duties.

Preparation

The first questions you must answer when defending is: How much ammunition and fuel do I have? Where is the enemy coming from? How many ships does the enemy have?

Answering these questions will help you better understand your position. If you are low on ammunition, you will hopefully have the time to distribute what little you have evenly amongst those under your command or amongst your own weapons. If you know where the enemy is coming from, you can shift your force's focus in that direction, set up firing lanes, and maybe even set up an ambush if the enemy doesn't know you're there.

Position Evaluation

Once you know what you're defending, you need to evaluate your position.

On land, the question would be “What's the terrain like?” In space, it's not much different. If a Moon of some sort is placed between the Enemy and the objective you're defending, it can make for a perfect position from which to defend from. It is likely far enough away from the objective that it makes the

attacker focus on you – and not instead bombarding whatever you're defending – and provides a wonderful staging area.

The Defense

The Defense. Where everything comes together, and the combat begins.

It is important that Formations stick together as long as they need to, and positions are not abandoned. Ships should focus on the most important targets first to bring the enemy's prize fighters down quickly.

And no matter what, until the forces absolutely need to retreat or not at all, the Defenders can NOT let attacking ships through to bombard, board, or otherwise seize the objective behind their line. A rear guard, or fast attack ships dedicated to the task of catching ships that do break through is recommended.

Miscellaneous

Any extra information or links that need to be stated/listed.

1)

and by extension, all nations who have civilian space traffic.

2)

In this context, stations are not included as they are typically not big enough to create any meaningful pull on the space around it. There are some few exceptions, however...

3)

Not knowing happens rarely, but it can happen in space.

4)

How a turret or weapon can turn to fire with any accuracy on a target.

5)

Weapons

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