

Boarding Actions

Countless battles rage across the Galaxy of the 41st Millennium, Whole planets consumed in war, but what of space. The cold voids of infinite space separating the few planets, whilst many ships ply through the warp what do they do when they arrive at their destination? Surely a cunning commander would prefer to strike the enemy whilst they are still in space rather than face the drawn out land battles as the force lands.

The following are some homemade rules with the aim of allowing you to fight the daring boarding actions described above. They are by no means perfect and more geared towards tense narrative games rather than tournament style play.

Force Organisation

Unlike conventional 40k battles boarding actions requires each player to have two armies. One defends their ship; the other boards the assault craft and hurtles towards the enemy.

I recommend splitting the forces 60% to your assault ships and 40% to the defenders. In a 1500pt game the attack would be 900pts and defenders would get 600pts.

Whilst this may seem to give the attackers a powerful advantage it is balanced, firstly many attackers will be destroyed trying to reach the ship. Secondly rules mentioned later give the defenders some advantages.

Force charts for assault part of army.

- 0-2 HQ
- 0-3 Elites (0-1 of these can be walkers)
- 2+ Troops
- 0-1 fast attack*
- 0-1 Heavy support**

Force charts for defenders

- 0-2 HQ
- 0-2 Elites (0-1 of these can be walkers)
- 2+ troops
- 0-1 fast attack*
- 0-2 Heavy support**

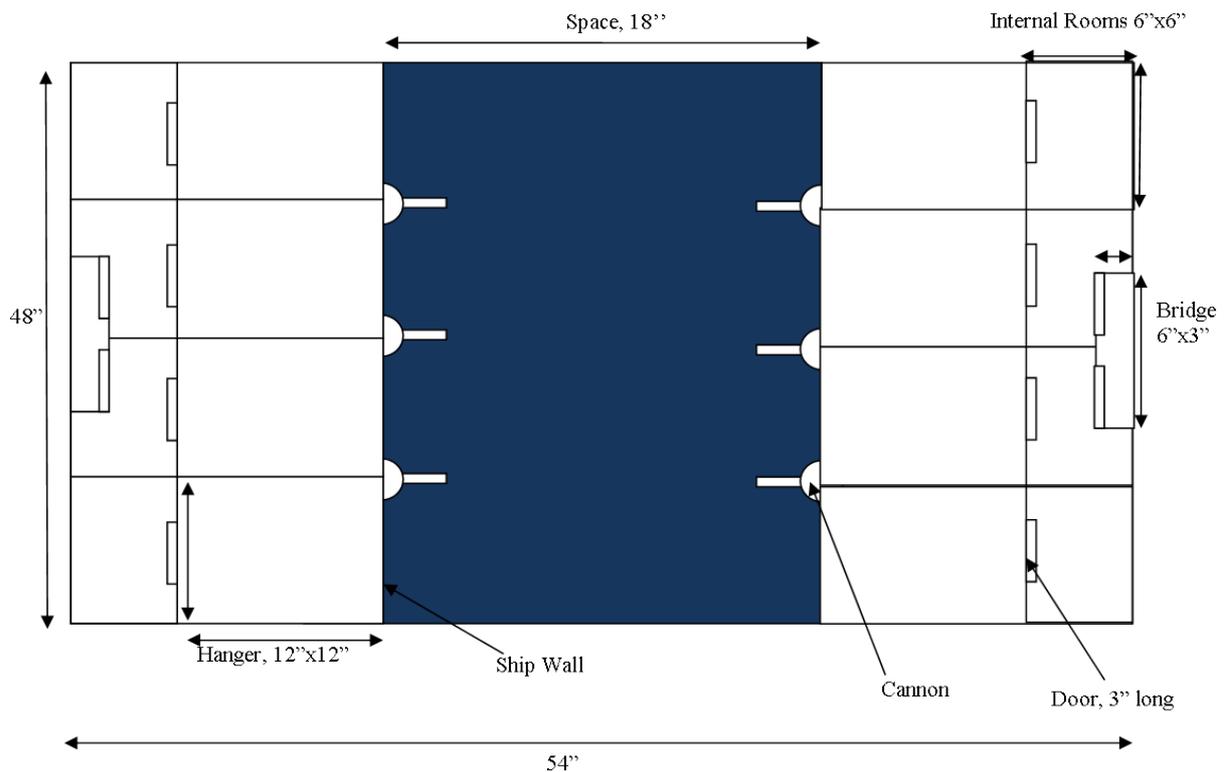
*Can only be bikes, jet bikes or horse riders, these would just be big enough to tear through the corridors.

****Heavy support may not be tanks; they are too bulky to be of any use in a spaceship.**

These charts are meant to give a flavour to the forces, players should aim to stick with the theme of a boarding/defence party. E.g an Ork player could make his three elites squads of nob bikers; this may be powerful but would break the feel of the game.

Note: Bear in mind the assault units have to fit between five attack craft. Each craft can hold either 12 troop sized models, 6 “larger” troops (terminators, orgyns, Nobz), 4 bikers/riders, or 1 walker/monstrous creature. In a 1500pt game teams receive up to eight assault craft.

Board



Here is an example.

Increasing Board Size

The above board is aimed at a 1500pt sized game. For larger games you can increase it how you want. A good scale to go with is for every extra 500pts add another section (Internal room/ hanger /cannon) Aim to keep the space under 25" as the assault craft can't move very fast.

Characteristic lines

As with other aspects of the game the ships and assault craft all have characteristics too. They are as follows. Each ship wall is a separate area between each gun. To be treated separately. Armour is all sides

Ship wall: Armour Value: 14, Structure points: 2. Houses a shield (Armour value 12) Shield must be destroyed before wall can be damaged.

Internal ship wall: Armour value: 13 (models/debris can breach these, covered in damage section)

Assault craft: Armour value 13. Capacity 12, Exit points: Front. Move: 5"+D6 (to represent use a flat cut out size 8x3")

Cannon: S10 AP1 Range 30" Armour value 15

Turn Sequence

- Embarkment: Both sides load troops into their attack craft preparing to assault.
- Barrage: The ships broadsides open up Laser cannons blaze through the dark.
- Movement: Both craft and men may move.
- Shoot: Troops fire their weapons.
- Assault: Troops fight it out at close quarters either inside the ships or in desperate ramming attacks between assaulting craft.

Embarkment

Each player can have no more than eight assault craft in play at a time.

When placing assault craft each hanger must contain one craft before extra ones can be added to the hangers.

Boarding craft: To represent the confusion and chaos of a space assault players don't choose which craft they place their troops in. They place the "embarked" troops off the board but still in squads applicable to be transported. (This may seem vague now but will be expanded upon later). If you have multiple squads you can place them in the same craft (when embarked place both squads together)

This is done for several reasons, firstly to replicate the sense of confusion between commanders and their space born troops. Game wise it adds an air of mystery as well as preventing unsporting players going all out to destroy their opponent's choice troops (this may seem the point of the game but it becomes boring if every turn your sternguard/ Aspect warriors are repeatedly shot down).

Assault troops who are **not** embarked: These are kept off the board as well (to prevent canny players simply placing their whole army inside their ship). They can be embarked during the embarkment phase and will then act like embarked troops.

Which Squad?

As already mentioned players won't know which embarked squad is in which assault craft. This is only determined when necessary eg when Ramming or Breaching occur (mentioned later) or when the craft is destroyed.

When necessary to find out which squad is where select the assault craft, then roll a D6 for every squad you have embarked. (If multiple squads are in one craft then roll one D6 which covers both). The squad that rolls the highest is placed in the craft (or destroyed if that is the case).

If multiple squads roll the same result that is also the highest rolled, repeat the process between these squads picking the highest again.

When squads are revealed place them (or as many of them as you can) onto assault craft on board.

Barrage

This turn covers the firing of the ships most deadly weapons its broadside batteries. Whether they are the Massive laser cannons of the Imperium, the otherworldly gauss turrets of the Necrontyr or the oversized rokkits of the Orks they all have a similar goal, the destruction of the enemy ship.

Firing: Cannons fire at the controlling players chosen target. They use the average Bs of the army controlling the ship (an Imperial Guard ship's cannons would be Bs3 for example). Results of the cannons damage will be covered later in the damage section.

Movement

Assault craft: These move $5+D6$ ". Before moving they may choose to pivot on the spot, this does not use up any movement. Moving your assault craft into contact with an enemy assault craft or ship results in a ramming action.

Ramming actions

There are two type of ramming actions. Breaching and Ramming.

Breaching is when the attacking troop's craft finally breach the enemies' walls. The sequence of play follows.

- The breaching unit is revealed. Placed inside enemy ship. On inside edge of ship wall opposite their craft. If this leads them into assault with enemy placed near wall then both sides take pressure test (mentioned later) then resolve combat. (combat rules are further explained in assault section)
- Both attacking unit and any enemies within $6"+D6$ take pressure test.
- Remove craft.
- The attacking unit cannot act further in the movement phase but may shoot (or run) in shoot phase and/or (if applicable) assault in the assault phase.
- Breaching can occur regardless of ship walls condition/shield. Once inside the "hole" left by the craft disappears. (It is presumed the damage caused is low key enough to be fixed by backup systems/generators or just a big sheet of metal)

- A ship can land inside a hole created by the cannon(see damage section), in this case no pressure test is necessary (there is already a vacuum of sorts due to the hole) however the squad must instead take a dangerous terrain test with no saves (any type) allowed.

Ramming happens when daring attackers decide to ram the enemies' assault craft instead.

Ramming will be explained in the assault section

Troops: move as normal unless modifiers apply (covered in Damage section)

Shoot

All troops fire as Normal, Ship cannons do not fire in this phase.

Assault

This covers assault, either the ramming actions of attack craft or the bloody melee between troops.

No retreat: There are few places to run in space; in ramming actions both sides have the no retreat special rule. Inside the ship the defender is on home ground so can run somewhere, however the attackers are in the middle of enemy terrain so still have the no retreat special rule.

If a unit already has the no retreat rule or any other ones then it plays as normal.

Ramming actions

If in the movement phase players may chose to ram the rules will now be explained.

Ramming: This is where a player rams and boards an enemy assault craft with one of his own. Attack is the best form of defence taken to the extreme. Ramming can be either head on head or head on side, in game turns there are no differences.

Whilst positioning takes place in the movement phase troops are not revealed until the assault phase where the fighting actually happens. This sequence shows the order of play within the assault phase for ramming.

- Units of both sides are revealed (mentioned in embarkment section)
- Both sides take pressure test. This is covered in the damage section but is essentially a dangerous terrain test for every model (both sides) with no saves representing the risk of being thrown from the craft as they collide.
- The assault. Works as normal with following changes...
- No pile in move (models will already be packed into craft, little space to manoeuvre).
- All units are subject to no retreat rule (they are in space there is nowhere to run).

- Casualties from the pressure test count towards combat resolution.
- Once one side is defeated their craft and models are removed.
- The victor's craft can pivot to chosen direction; victor's models are kept on craft. Though this contradicts the earlier rules it can be imagined emergency broadcasts from losers craft reveal their attackers identity. (Also it prevents squads being in several ships at once")
- Victors craft acts as normal for remaining turns.
- Ships engaged in ramming actions can be shot at (though surely only really callous commander would risk killing their own troops?) this is further covered in the damage section.

Damage/Special rules

These cover the damage results and any special rules.

Damage

Of craft: When a craft is hit roll for armour penetration. If a glancing or penetrating hit is scored refer to list below -1 for glancing (to minimum of 1), +1 for penetrating (to maximum of 6).

Roll a D6

- 1-2: pressure test for craft
- 3-4: pressure test, craft scatters D6" If collides with ship wall (regardless of team) counts as breaching, if collides with other assault craft the target craft must also take a pressure test. No ramming occurs (craft is spiralling through space not preparing to assault). After pressure test place both craft 1" apart.
- 5-6: Craft is destroyed, roll to determine which squad was onboard and remove it from the "embarked units section. D3 debris is created scattering D6". When hit by debris target takes an automatic S8 hit. Debris is then removed (prevents overcrowding represents it burning up etc.)

Pressure tests

These represent the vulnerability of fighting in space, a single breach of the craft can prove catastrophic as occupants are asphyxiated or blown out into space. Two types are possible.

During ramming: As both units have been revealed roll a d6 for each model, on a 3+ all is fine they manage to hang on enough for the craft's emergency measures to stabilise. On a 1 or 2 they are killed regardless of any saves or wounds. (a refractor field or tough constitution won't help in a vacuum).

Monstrous creatures take D3 wounds representing their size making it hard for them to be pulled out.

Walkers take a glancing hit representing the impact jamming systems etc.

From shooting: Unlike during ramming, on other occasions such as shooting we don't know which unit is in which craft. If a craft with unknown occupants suffers a pressure test roll a d6, this many casualties are suffered when the unit is revealed. In this case the owning player removes models representing troops acting to prioritise saving leaders and special weapons first. A walker or monstrous creature suffers the same results mentioned above when revealed.

To help remember which craft has suffered casualties a notebook or small piece of paper on each craft would allow you to record them.

Ship wall damage

Once the ship wall has lost its shield and structure points all hell reigns as power fails and occupants are plunged into a dark icy vacuum.

When a ship wall section is breached place a marker (a 6" strip of paper will do) over the centre of the wall section. Assault craft can land here as mentioned earlier.

To represent the massive damage caused by the hit the 12x12" hanger behind the wall now has the following rules.

- All units in hanger take pressure test.
- Units in the hangar must take dangerous terrain tests each time they move.
- Night fighting rules apply to the hanger.
- Failed saves of any sort result in instant death (punctured armour can be fatal in a vacuum)
- Flamer template weapons don't work.

D3 Debris is also scattered D6'' inflicting S8 hits on whatever it hits. It may puncture an internal wall in which case the room or hanger which the punctured wall leads to will also become a vacuum.

Cannon damage

A penetrating hit destroys the gun, it is no longer useable. A glancing hit means the gun cannot fire for the next turn.

Casualties

With exploding assault craft and most actions resulting in casualties all but the biggest games will quickly run out of troops. This is no matter; whereas a star ship requires generations to build new regiments can be raised every day so loss of men is the last thing a commander should be considering. To represent the vast amount of manpower available on ship casualties can be replaced.

Casualties within assault list: If the controlling player wishes to do so he can choose to disband any of his units once they are inside the enemy ship (this doesn't literally mean they disband, they could be killed by security systems or venture off to attack other areas of the ship) the squad is removed. The squad can be re embarked next turn starting off in an assault craft in the owner's ships. This represents the stream of reinforcements as troops volunteer (either by themselves or by others) to join the assault waves. Troops cannot be disbanded whilst in assault craft (there is nowhere to go).

Casualties within defence list: Likewise you may choose to disband defending units (as the go to fetch others for example) These troops can re enter play from the ships bridge on a roll of 3+ next turn and act normally.

- In **both** cases troops cannot disband during assaults of any kind, they must disband at the end of both players' turns.

Aim of the game

By now you are probably wondering what the point of this game is. The objective of both sides is to cripple the enemy's internal systems. Rendering the ship useless.

Location

Internal systems are located past the hangers in either the internal rooms or the bridge. There are 3 internal systems in total, they can be represented by tokens or modelled markers. At the start of the game each player places his 3 internal systems. There can only be one in each room. There are 3 types of system: generators, armouries, life support. Each has their own effects.

Characteristics: Internal system Armour (all sides) 11 a penetrating or glancing hit destroys it.

Generator: when destroyed power goes down, all areas except bridge of the ship (has a backup generator) now play with night fighting rules.

Armoury: Only the most foolhardy or brave aim to blow up a ships ammunition supply. When destroyed D6 large blast templates scatter 3D6'' throughout ship. Anything touched by the blast takes

a S8 AP4 hit. These can damage walls/other internal systems too. Once destroyed ship guns -1strength.

Life support: When this goes down oxygen systems may malfunction and temperature controls halt. When destroyed all of ship counts as dangerous terrain to all units inside.

Location unknown: Since the attacker has never been inside the enemy's ship before he does not know which internal system is where. To represent this each internal system is represented by an upturned piece of paper the other side naming the system each owner places these at the start of the game so his attacker cannot see what he is attacking. It is revealed when the room is entered.

Points/game duration

The victor is determined by points destroying parts of the opponents ship earns you points.

Gun (per gun) 2pts

Ship wall (per section) 5pts

Armoury 2pts

Life support 3pts

Generator 2pts

The game can either be played to a pre set number of turns or to a pre set point or time limit.

