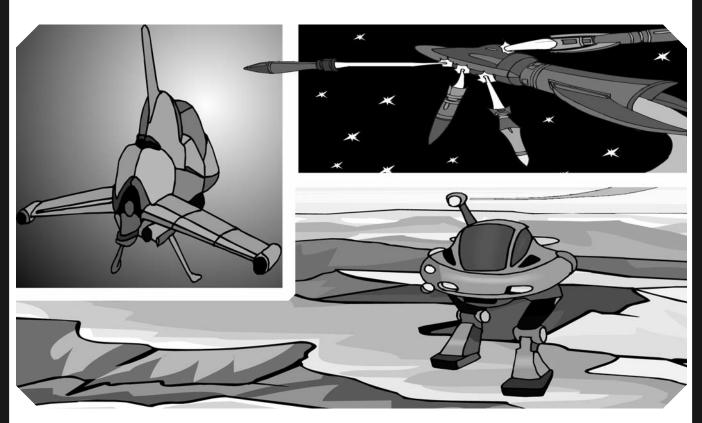
GURPS)

Fourth Edition

SPACESHIPS 4

Fighters, Carriers, and Mecha^m



Written by DAVID L. PULVER Edited by ANDY VETROMILE Illustrated by DAN SMITH

An e23 Sourcebook for GURPS®

STEVE JACKSON GAME

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Introduction

Fast, deadly, and expendable, swarms of one- or two-man space fighters are as much an icon of space opera as lumbering interstellar battleships! This book provides examples of these and other tactical craft (such as drop ships and space mecha) along with the carriers that transport them into action. New cinematic combat options suitable for ships of all sizes have been added, as well as design rules, systems, and features for small craft (including tiny SM +4 vessels), carriers, and missiles.

Publication History

Some of the rules for cinematic space combat are derived from those in *GURPS Space, Third Edition* by Steve Jackson, William Barton, and David Pulver.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David L. Pulver is a freelance writer and game designer based in Victoria, British Columbia. He is the co-author of the

About the Series

GURPS Spaceships 4: Fighters, Carriers, and Mecha is one of several books in the GURPS Spaceships series. It supports GURPS Space campaigns by providing ready-to-use spacecraft descriptions and rules for space travel, combat, and operations. Each volume offers vessel descriptions and supplementary mechanics. GMs need the core book, GURPS Spaceships, to use this one.

This book doesn't cover all combat vessels. For battle-ships, frigates, space fortresses, and other fighting ships, see *GURPS Spaceships 3: Warships and Space Pirates* (which also covers hex-grid combat).

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Bibliographies. Many of our books have extensive bibliographies, and we're putting them online – with links to let you buy the resources that interest you! Go to each book's web page and look for the "Bibliography" link.

Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata pages for all *GURPS* releases, including this book, are available on our website – see above.

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set*, *Fourth Edition*. Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.

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Extra-special thanks to Martin Heidemann, Kenneth Peters, and Jon Walters for playtest contributions above and beyond the call of duty.

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NEBULA-CLASS LIGHT CARRIER (TL10[^])

This is a very small, streamlined carrier starship designed for both space and atmospheric combat. Built on a 3,000-ton (SM +9) hull, this 300-foot-long vessel is intended for assaults on planets and large space colonies. Weaponry is optimized for close-range combat and anti-missile or anti-fighter defense. Its torch drives give it sufficient thrust and delta-V to land on a planet and to maneuver using fusion ram-rocket engines.

Front Hull	System
[1-2]	Advanced Metallic Laminate Armor (total dDR 30).
[3]	Habitat (eight cabins, eight bunkrooms, and four-bed sickbay).
[4-6]	Hangar Bays (100 tons capacity each).
[core]	Control Room (C8 computer, comm/sensor 8, and six control stations).

Central Hull	System
[1]	Advanced Metallic Laminate Armor (dDR 15).
[2]	Tactical Array (comm/sensor 10).
[3!]	Secondary Battery (10 turrets with 10 MJ rapid fire improved lasers).
[4]	Hangar Bay (100 tons capacity).
[5]	Engine Room (two workspaces).
[6!]	Stardrive Engine (FTL-1).
Rear Hull	System
[1]	Advanced Metallic Laminate Armor (dDR 15).
[2-4]	Fuel Tanks (150 tons hydrogen with 7.5 mps
	delta-V each).
[5-6]	High-Thrust Fusion Torch Engines (ram
	rockets, 1G acceleration each).
[core]	Fission Reactor (one Power Point).

Typical crew is five bridge officers (pilot, captain, navigator, communications operator, engineering officer), two gunners, two technicians, and the small-craft pilots (with any techs they require).

TL	Spacecraft	dST/HP	Hnd/SR	HT	Move	LWt.	Load	SM	Occ	dDR	Range	Cost
PIL	OTING/TL1	0 (HIGH	-PERFOR	RMAN(CE SPACECE	RAFT)						
10^	<i>Nebula-</i> class	100	-1/5	13	2G/22.5 mps	3,000	404.8	+9	48ASV	30/15/15	1×	\$723.2M

Top air speed is 3,500 mph.

TAROT-CLASS LIGHT CARRIER (TL11[^])

This is a far-ranging interstellar carrier for transporting fighters and other small craft. It uses a 30,000-ton (SM +11) unstreamlined hull 400 feet long. It relies on its onboard squadrons for both striking and protection – backed up by decent armor, its force screen, and two batteries of beam weapons for self-defense. The *Tarot*-class carries 4,000 tons of small craft in its four hangar bays. An unusual choice is the provision of onboard manufacturing capability, freeing it from the need to return to base to repair itself or its fighters (as long as the fabricator is undamaged). This makes the *Tarot*-class especially useful for lengthy armed-exploration missions of hostile space or long-term operations behind enemy lines.

Front Hull	System
[1]	Nanocomposite Armor (dDR 70).
[2!]	Light Force Screen (dDR 200).*
[3]	Tactical Array (comm/sensor 13).*
[4-5]	Hangar Bays (1,000 tons capacity each).*
[6!]	Fabricator (\$1.5M/hour production capacity).*

Central Hull	System
[1]	Nanocomposite Armor (dDR 70).
[2-3!]	Secondary Batteries (10 turrets with 1 GJ improved UV laser each).*
[4]	Habitat (50 cabins and 25 bunkrooms with total life support, 20-bed sickbay, and 150 tons cargo).*
[5-6]	Hangar Bays (1,000 tons capacity each).*
[core]	Control Room (C10 computer, comm/sensor 11, and 15 control stations).*
Rear Hull	System
[1]	Nanocomposite Armor (dDR 70).
[2-3!]	Super Reactionless Engines (50G each).*
[4-6!]	Stardrive Engines (FTL-1 each).*
[core]	Super Fusion Reactor (four Power Points).*

^{*} Three workspaces per system.

It has artificial gravity and gravitic compensators.

Typical crew is 10 bridge operators (including captain, executive officer, pilot, engineering officer, navigator, sensor operator, communication officer, and carrier operations officer), 20 gunners, 51 technicians, and one medic, plus small-craft pilots and flight crews. Multiple crew shifts are carried.

TL Spacecraft	dST/HP	Hnd/SR	HT	Move	LWt.	Load	SM	Occ	dDR	Range	Cost
PILOTING/TL1	1 (HIGH	-PERFOR	RMANC	E SPACEC	RAFT)						
11 [^] Tarot-class	200	0/5	14	100G/c	30,000	4,170	+11	200ASV	70*	3×	\$5.512B
11 [^] Tarot-class	200	0/5	14	100G/c	30,000	4,170	+11	200ASV	70*	3×	\$5.512

^{*} Add dDR 200 if force screen is powered up.

LANDING ON A SPACECRAFT

A small spacecraft may actually land *on* a larger vessel, even if that vehicle lacks external clamps or hangar bays, and/or is uncooperative! This can only be performed on a spacecraft whose SM exceeds your own by eight or more. Thus, an SM +4 fighter can land on a craft with SM +12 or more. (The GM is free to rule that a ship's unique geometry precludes available landing space, however.) It requires a Rendezvous, followed by a Piloting roll for the actual landing. Use the same rules as for entering a hangar, but with an extra -4 penalty. All landings (and subsequent takeoffs) are assumed to use low-powered attitude thrusters (as incorporated into the spacecraft's control system) and do not damage either vessel.

Tactical Combat: This rule can be used if the spacecraft have matched velocities (with their vector counter and position counter in the same location).

SACRIFICIAL DODGE

Your spacecraft can defend another by flying into the path of an attack against it! To do so, your ship must be flying in formation or rendezvoused with the ally you are protecting. Announce a sacrificial dodge *after* the enemy makes his attack roll but *before* your friend attempts his defense roll. Use the ordinary rules for a dodge. If you succeed, *you* are hit by the attack. If you fail, you didn't move in time, but your ally still gets his normal defense roll. In either case, since you moved, you cannot retreat if *you* are attacked before your next turn. This is a cinematic rule if dodging beam weapons, but reasonably realistic for dodging ballistic attacks.

Tactical Combat: This defense can be used if the allied spacecraft are in the same hex. Ignore the references to retreating, but otherwise the procedure is identical.

SPACE PILOTING TECHNIQUES

GMs may allow space pilots to learn particular techniques – for example, a smuggler might practice evasive maneuvering. Individuals often give them flashy names such as "Reverse Cobra" or "Freda's Feint."

Tactical Combat: These techniques are usable only with the basic space combat system.

Aggressive Maneuvering

Average

Default: prerequisite skill.

Prerequisite: Piloting (High-Performance Spacecraft); cannot exceed prerequisite skill+2.

You are skilled at offensive space-combat maneuvers. If you know this technique above default, you may use it instead of the underlying Piloting skill when you take the Closing maneuver option, except for Closing maneuvers that use the Ambush or Reversal strategies.

Ambush Maneuver

Average

Default: prerequisite skill.

Prerequisite: Piloting (any type); cannot exceed prerequisite skill+3

You are skilled at carefully timed ambushes. If you know this technique above default, you may use it instead of the underlying Piloting skill when you take a Closing maneuver using the Ambush strategy.

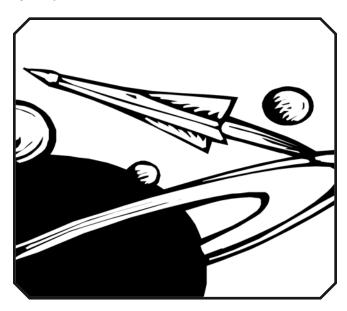
Escape Maneuver

Average

Default: prerequisite skill.

Prerequisite: Piloting (High-Performance Spacecraft); cannot exceed prerequisite skill+4.

You are familiar with space-combat maneuvers designed to break off from combat. If you know this technique above default, you may use it instead of the underlying Piloting skill if your last movement option was Retreat and a foe is Closing against you.



Evasive Maneuvering

Average

Default: prerequisite skill.

Prerequisite: Piloting (High-Performance Spacecraft); cannot exceed prerequisite skill+4.

You are skilled at performing evasive space-combat maneuvers. If you know this technique above default, you may use it instead of the underlying Piloting skill if your last movement option was Evasive Action and a foe is Closing against you.

Reversal Maneuver

Average

Default: prerequisite skill.

Prerequisite: Piloting (High-Performance Spacecraft); cannot exceed prerequisite skill+3.

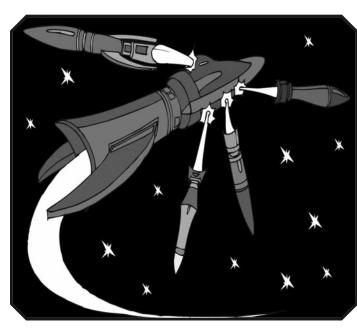
You are skilled at sudden direction changes. If you know this technique above default, you may use it instead of the underlying Piloting skill when you take a Closing maneuver using the Reversal strategy.

MISSILES

The standard missiles in *GURPS Spaceships* only cover some of the possible types. This section provides additional rules for customization. Any spacecraft – not just fighters, mecha, and carriers – can use them.

BOMBS

Spacecraft may replace some or all of their missile load with *bombs*. Bombs are precision-guided munitions, similar to intercontinental ballistic missile reentry vehicles. Launchers may load three bombs in place of a single missile. They lack propulsion systems but have small maneuver thrusters (for vacuum) and steering fins (for atmosphere), permitting terminal guidance.



Statistics

Bombs mass one-third as much as an equivalent missile and are one SM smaller. They cost \$100K per ton. They may have conventional or unconventional warheads.

Bombing

Bombs may be used against space or ground targets. For ground targets, bombs up to 28cm have space accuracy (sAcc) of TL-8, while those of 32cm or more have sAcc of TL-7. All sizes of bombs have only sAcc -11 vs. space targets.

In the basic combat system, bombs have range P vs. space targets and range S vs. surface targets. They have no minimum velocity. In the tactical combat system, bombs are used like missiles but lack a thrust rating or burn points.

When dropped on surface targets, bombs rely on targeting data from the launching spacecraft. However, a forward observer on the ground with line of sight on the target can communicate with the firing vessel or paint the target with a laser designator to guide the bombs. Roll against his Forward Observer skill. Success adds +2 to the roll to hit.

Customized Missile Warheads

A missile may have one of these warhead options instead of a conventional or nuclear warhead.

X-Ray Laser Warheads (TL10)

This is a targeting system and set of lasing rods wrapped around a nuclear bomb. X-ray laser warheads are available for missiles and 16cm+ guns. As it approaches the target, the warhead aligns itself and detonates. The explosion pumps multiple powerful (but short-ranged) X-ray laser beams.

Equipped missiles and shot do not make ballistic attack rolls – instead they make beam-fire attacks. The X-ray laser warhead has a RoF equal to its diameter in cm/2, *not* modified by turn length (since it fires all shots at once). It detonates far enough from the target that the small nuclear blast does not inflict damage.

In the basic space combat system, the X-ray laser has the same range as a missile (of whatever type), but attacks only once, as if it were a beam weapon.

In the tactical space combat system it attacks in the beam fire phase (self-destructing as it does so). Roll against the missile gunner's Gunner (Beams) skill instead of Artillery (Guided Missile). Each beam that hits inflicts 10d(5) burning damage (radiation and surge damage modifiers). Range is 300/1,000 miles: 0/1 hex for 1,000-mile scale, 3/10 in 100-mile scale, or 30/100 in 10-mile scale.

X-ray laser warheads have the same cost and LC as antimatter warheads.

Devourer Warheads (TL11)

This warhead spreads a swarm of hungry microbots or nanomachines over the target, which eats through the armor and enters the vessel. These warheads cannot penetrate force screens! Otherwise, a successful hit inflicts corrosion damage depending on the time scale, shown in the following table.

Scale	d-Damage
20-second	1d(10) corrosion
1-minute	3d+1(3) corrosion
3-minute	10d corrosion
10-minute	20d(0.5) corrosion

The effect burns out after 10 minutes. Devourer warheads have the same cost and LC as nuclear warheads.

Eagle Two-Nine approaching asteroid, commander. Eagle Ten descending with nuke.

- Paul Morrow, **Space: 1999** #1.3

DESIGN 40

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Pretty soon the **Defiant** will be going into battle, Worf will be happy, and the rest of us will be miserable.

- Chief Miles O'Brien, **Star Trek: Deep Space Nine** #7.1

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