

Harmonizing *Imperium* and *WarpWar*

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Introduction

William A. Peterson's classic *Space Gamer* article "*Imperium* and *WarpWar*—Made For Each Other?" (TSG #19, Sep/Oct 1978) suggests a wonderful idea: use *WarpWar* rules to fight out *Imperium* space combats. But this basic concept needs some elaboration and detail, which Peterson's article does not provide. He admitted to not having tried out his ideas, and so do I.

In what follows, the actual rules are denoted by bullets, with commentary and rationale in the non-bulleted paragraphs.

This article is written with respect to the rules of the first GDW edition of *Imperium* and the original Metagaming *WarpWar* rules. I don't foresee any major problem in applying them to the other editions of *Imperium* (not to mention *Dark Nebula*), but I have not exhaustively looked into that option.

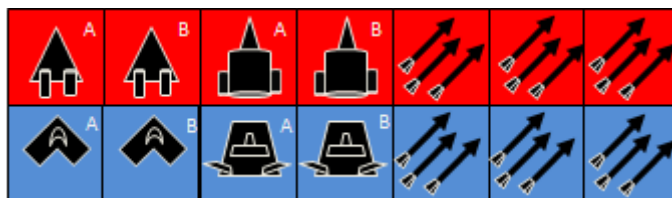
Components

To play this variant, one will need a copy of the *Imperium* game and the *WarpWar* rules.

To do the *WarpWar*-style combat, there has to be a means of identifying individual ships. Rather than marking up a collectible copy of *Imperium*, I suggest finding a scan of the *Imperium* countersheets, e.g. on Boardgamegeek, neatly adding letters, and then mounting the whole thing on cardboard and cutting it out. Note that the countersheet is meant to be a limitation on what can be built, an *Imperium* rule (with subsequent Marc Miller confirmation, I believe) that carries over into this game *except* for the creation of player-designed ships, which will require new counters. Players may make their own, or use those provided below.

(The *Imperium* rules say that each counter represents a squadron, but I don't think anybody ever believed that. They're individual ships.)

On rare occasions, missiles may exist on their own, rather than as an unchecked-off box on a ship sheet. In such an instance, provided herewith are counters that represent threesomes of *WarpWar* missiles.



Ship-building

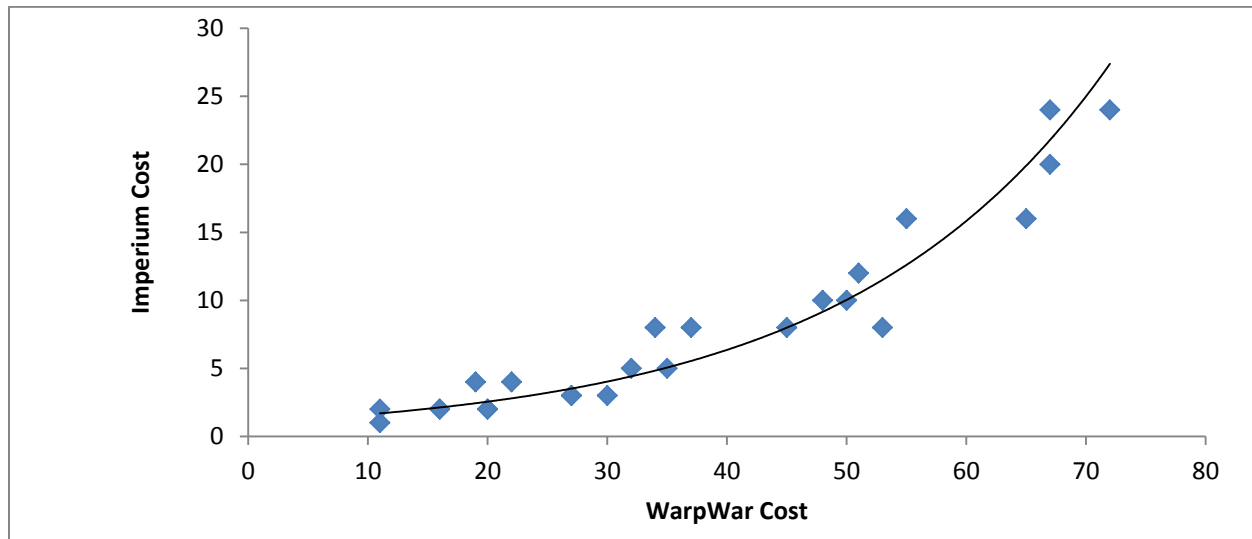
As Peterson observes, the two games seem “made for each other” in that their ships share the basic attributes of beams, screens, missiles, possible ability to move along jump lines, and possible ability to carry other ships. Peterson carried this equivalence over into using the *Imperium* beam, screen, and missile values in *WarpWar* combat. A good first step, therefore, is to look at *Imperium*’s ships in *WarpWar* terms; see table 1. (Note that in table 1, as in the rest of this article, the term *Imperium* means the game, while the term “Imperial” refers to the non-Terran side in that game.

Table 1: *Imperium* ships in *WarpWar* terms

		WARP	BEAM	SCREENS	TUBES	MISSILES	RACKS	POWER	Cost	
Common	WW Prices	5	1	1	1	0.333333	1	1	WW Pts	Imperium RU
	TRANSPORT	1	0	1	0	0	0	5	11	1
	TANKER	1	0	1	0	0	0	5	11	2
Terran	FIGHTER	0	2	2	1	3	0	10	16	2
	MONITOR	0	9	8	0	0	0	17	34	8
	MISSILE BOAT	1	0	1	6	18	0	12	30	3
	SCOUT	1	2	1	0	0	0	12	20	2
	DESTROYER	1	3	2	1	3	0	15	27	3
	LIGHT CRUISER	1	6	4	1	3	0	18	35	5
	STRIKE CRUISER	1	0	5	8	24	0	24	50	10
	HEAVY CRUISER	1	6	6	6	18	0	24	53	8
	DREADNOUGHT	1	10	7	9	27	0	25	65	16
	BATTLESHIP	1	12	9	9	27	0	28	72	24
	MOTHERSHIP	1	0	2	0	0	3	12	22	4
Imperial	FIGHTER	0	1	2	2	6	0	9	16	2
	MONITOR	0	0	7	10	30	0	10	37	8
	SCOUT	1	1	1	1	3	0	11	20	2
	DESTROYER	1	2	2	2	6	0	14	27	3
	LIGHT CRUISER	1	2	3	4	12	0	14	32	5
	STRIKE CRUISER	1	2	4	7	21	0	23	48	10
	HEAVY CRUISER	1	5	5	5	15	0	20	45	8
	ATTACK CRUISER	1	7	5	5	15	0	24	51	12
	DREADNOUGHT	1	4	8	9	27	0	20	55	16
	IMP DREADNOUGHT	1	6	8	10	30	0	28	67	20
	BATTLESHIP	1	7	9	12	36	0	22	67	24
	MOTHERSHIP	1	0	1	0	0	3	10	19	4

Figure 1 relates the ships’ costs in the two games.

Figure 1: *Imperium* ship cost as a function of *WarpWar* ship cost



As can easily be seen in figure 1, the cost relationship is non-linear: small and medium ships' *Imperium* ships' cost is less than proportional to their *WarpWar*. The solid line is a nicely logarithmic fit.

One major attraction of *WarpWar* is that it provides something to do when there's nobody to play with: design ships. We would want to retain that feature when combining the games, and yet we would also like to retain *Imperium*'s original flavor, which is in part provided by its ships. The *Imperium* ships' generally lesser pricing provides an easy means of doing so.

- When building an original-game ship (called a "stock" ship) in *Imperium*, pay the original-game RU price; when building a ship of player design (called a "custom" ship, pay one-third the *WarpWar* Build Point price, rounded down.

With exceptions for really big ships such as the Imperial BB, a ship costs more if it is custom-designed than if it does as a stock ship, if it is one. This way, if people *really* want to design their own ships, they can, but they have an incentive not to. Note that this rule provides an (expensive) alternative to getting permission to build the big *Imperium* ships and/or to exceed the number that come with the game: "design" them yourself, and pay through the nose (or other breathing organ).

It would be contrary to *Imperium* to have Monitors carried around by little jumpships with racks, so we need a rule that limits racks to carrying only Fighters:

- Racks can only carry Fighters and Jump Troops.

But what's a Fighter? Players might want to design their own.

- A Fighter is any ship without a Warp Generator that costs 16 points or less when designed under the *WarpWar* rules.

But we won't let them design their own Tankers or Transports.

- To have the Tanker or Transport capability, a ship must be an original Tanker or Transport.

Finally, *WarpWar* ships have Technology levels, so they need them in *Imperium* as well.

- All ships—stock and custom—have the Technology Level of their side, as of their construction. Both sides' starting Technology Level is 1, which is the Technology Level of the ships possessed at the start of the game, or, in a campaign, the first war.
- (Optional Exception Rule) Ships possessed at the start of the game (or of the first war of a campaign), being leftovers from a long period of peace, have Technology Level zero. But at the start of the game (or of the first game of a campaign), the two sides' Technology Level immediately becomes 1, and applies to any new construction until it is increased.
- When, in the *Imperium* game, a Terran technology die roll results in a technology that is already possessed, the Terran Technology Level goes up by one instead. When the Imperial player gets a "--" result on an Intervention roll, the Imperial Technology level goes up by one. In a campaign, Technology Level increases carry over through peacetime and to the next war.

Movement

Movement happens as per the *Imperium* rules.

Combat

When ships meet in the *Imperium* game, they have *WarpWar* combat. But tankers and Transports need to have the benefit of an *Imperium*-style screening rule:

- Use *Imperium*'s "Ship Allocation" rule to set up each turn's *WarpWar* combat, and in particular to establish "screened" status for some ships.

But other than for screening, ship combat is *WarpWar* combat, so there are no such things as high-intensity missile fire, short range missile fire, suicide missile attacks, *or the need to shoot at every unscreened target once before beginning to double up.*

- (Optional Exception Rule) The whole point of this variant is to use *WarpWar* to fight out the *Imperium* combats, but doing so could be unduly pointless and onerous in some cases, such as combats that are extremely one-sided and/or just not worth the trouble. If *both* players agree, *Imperium* combat can in such cases be used instead of *WarpWar* combat.
- As in *Imperium*, Fighters can be carried by Transports but can only be used in combat if they go in on the System Ship racks of Motherships—or any custom-designed ships that have racks.

Missiles aren't consumables in *Imperium*, but in *WarpWar*, and therefore in this variant, they are:

- Missiles are consumed while fired, and must be replenished. Three missiles cost 1 RU, and they are created at a Friendly world or connected outpost, not on the Production Track.

- Missiles can be transported under *Imperium's* Transportation rules. They can be carried by Transports, Tankers, and any ship with missile tubes. Transports and Tankers can carry unlimited numbers of missiles. Ships with missile tubes can carry three per tube.
- Missiles could conceivably be dropped off at some World or Outpost, creating the need for the missile counters described in the Components section.

The designer should be so fortunate to play this game enough times as to witness this need on some occasion!

- Dropped-off missiles share the fate of their World or Outpost.

Ships attaining an Escape result in *WarpWar* combat withdraw as if in the *Imperium* rules.

- To do an *Imperium* Breakoff, a ship must attain the Escape result in *WarpWar* combat, at which point it experiences the results of Breakoff as in the *Imperium* rules.
- Combat damage to ships persists after the combat is over. Combat damage does not cause Disruption, but it is repaired by having the ship undergo one of *Imperium's* two Disruption-curing processes—Civilized and Frontier—depending on location.

Planetary bombardment takes place under the *Imperium* rules.

Imperial Replacement

Imperial Replacement happens normally, but there is the question of how custom-designed ships fit in.

Before the game, and before choosing sides, players can agree on one of three options:

- (Players' option #0, and default; use this option if players cannot agree, or forget to have this discussion before the game.) Custom-built ships are not replaced.
- (Players' option #1) Custom-built ships *are* replaced.
- (Players' option #2) Custom-built ships *are* replaced, but not necessarily with the same ship. The Imperial player rolls a die: on 1-3, the custom-built ship is replaced by another copy of itself; on a 4-6, it is replaced by another ship of the same *WarpWar* point cost, *designed by the Terran player*. (With a normal backlog situation, he will probably have time to create the new design at home, between wars.)

The third option rule represents the vagaries of Imperial research and development, whose cast-offs find their way out to the war against Terra. The Imperial player does not get to see the design of his new ship until it is produced! This is a good rule to use if people think that the campaign game unduly favors the Imperial side.

Maintenance and Disruption

Imperium ships have a Maintenance number, so custom-designed ships need to have one as well.

- A custom-designed ship's Maintenance number is the sum of one fifteenth of its *WarpWar* cost and one hundredth of the size of its largest component. Round *off* (not simply up or down) *after* doing the addition.
- Stock ships use their normal *Imperium* maintenance numbers.

Table 2 shows the good, but imperfect, agreement the two kinds of maintenance number.

Table 2: Comparison of formula-based maintenance numbers with those of *Imperium*.

		WW Pts	Biggest Cost	WarpWar Maintenance	Imperium Maintenance
Common	TRANSPORT	11	5	1	1
	TANKER	11	5	1	1
Terran	FIGHTER	16	10	1	1
	MONITOR	34	17	2	1
	MISSILE BOAT	30	18	2	1
	SCOUT	20	12	1	1
	DESTROYER	27	15	2	2
	LIGHT CRUISER	35	18	3	3
	STRIKE CRUISER	50	24	4	4
	HEAVY CRUISER	53	24	4	4
	DREADNOUGHT	65	27	5	6
	BATTLESHIP	72	28	5	5
	MOTHERSHIP	22	12	2	1
Imperial	FIGHTER	16	9	1	1
	MONITOR	37	30	3	3
	SCOUT	20	11	1	1
	DESTROYER	27	14	2	2
	LIGHT CRUISER	32	14	2	3
	STRIKE CRUISER	48	23	3	4
	HEAVY CRUISER	45	20	3	4
	ATTACK CRUISER	51	24	4	4
	DREADNOUGHT	55	27	4	6
	IMP DREADNOUGHT	67	30	5	5
	BATTLESHIP	67	36	5	5
	MOTHERSHIP	19	10	1	1

So there is another reason to design one's own ships: although they will cost more, they may have lower Maintenance numbers. For example, a Terrain Dreadnought, ostensibly created as a custom *WarpWar* ship, would cost 21 RU instead of the stock version's 16, but it would have a Maintenance number of 5, rather than 6, which might be worth the extra cost. (Or they may not; a custom-designed Imperial BB would only cost 22, two points less than the *Imperium* cost of 24, but its Maintenance is higher.)

- Disruption, WW-style: If a ship becomes Disrupted as a result of non-maintenance, the player secretly rolls a die to find what system is affected. 1-2 = Beams; 3-4 = Screens; 5 = Tubes; 6 = Missiles. A second die is rolled and the result is subtracted from the affected system. No system

can go below zero. Unused pips on the second die are allocated by a second roll of the first die, and more if needed.

- Disrupted ships must also check for Warp Generator functionality when jumping, per the *Imperium* rules.
- Ships recover from Disruption (and the *WarpWar*-type damage it causes) using the procedures in the *Imperium* rules.