VARIANTS

DeltaVee Enhanced

by Justin Leites

Tactical space combat games which use a relatively realistic game system tend to be exceedingly deadly. Even when one side has a large advantage, there will still be heavy casualties in any battle. For this reason, character-players in SPI's science fiction role-playing game, *Universe*, will largely prefer to avoid combat as much as possible. The tactical combat rules as embodied in *DeltaVee* and the way the scenarios have been set up favor maneuver over actual combat. Most of the scenarios in *DeltaVee* are escape maneuvers, for logical reasons within a role-playing universe.

In an offensive combat, laser and particle beam weapons are intended to damage individual pods while a missile may be able to destroy an entire ship. There is no such thing as a defensive posture in space combat; both sides are going for victory at any expense.

When one considers that in a role-playing game the whole idea is to keep a character alive and growing through adventures, a head-to-head confrontation will probably see some, if not all, the characters killed. While on a planetary expedition a character may be able to escape through his use of skills or quick wit, in a space combat these abilities will be of limited advantage. Furthermore, the costs involved in building and owning a ship, particularly a merchant ship, may make any combat prohibitively expensive. Though the costs of building a ship is not as expensive in *Universe* as in *Traveller*, it will take a long period of adventuring to replace any lost ship.

Thus, the scenarios for *DeltaVee* were designed to keep the characters and their ships in existence for further adventures. In addition to escape, another popular maneuver is threaten-and-board, in which a more heavily armed ship can threaten a weaker ship. Once more, the character interaction takes place in an environment (inside a ship) where the characters' skills and wits can best be utilized. It is not unusual in a game to have a merchant ship yield a rich cargo simply under the threat of combat, an exceptionally cost-efficient method of gaining wealth.

The *DeltaVee* scenarios played down combat in favor of escape. The most important lesson to be gleaned was that a player should never exceed the maneuver rating of a ship with the velocity rating. A ship that can no longer weave is an easy target for missiles. A player who maneuvers a ship properly should be able to escape with only minor damage about fifty percent of the time.

For players who are more interested in testing *DeltaVee* as a tactical *combat* system, the following scenarios offer a chance to explore the tactics of such an approach. These scenarios will give players a better, albeit bloodier, feeling of ship-to-ship combat.
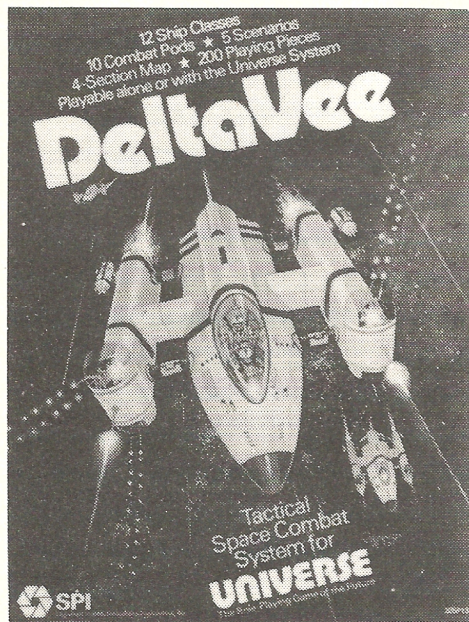
SCENARIO 6: Battle for B'Mali

B'Mali, a small, mineral rich planet on the periphery of the Federation, has decided to break off its ties with the central government. Normally, the Federation would let the peripheral planets have a certain amount of autonomy, but B'Mali has large quantities of rare fissionables the Federation requires. Thus, a punitive action is begun to bring B'Mali back in line.

Map Deployment:

A	B	C

Note: B'Mali is positioned in hex 0707 on Map A.

Player 1 (B'Mali) Deployment:

The B'Mali player has 100,000 Trans with which to purchase his fleet (the colonists traded plutonium to a rather shady — i.e., piratical — trade conglomeration in exchange for the ships). Expenditures for the ships and pods are listed in the accompanying Craft and Pod Cost Chart (left over Trans are lost; no partial expenditures may be made). Ships are set up on hex 0707 of Map A using any facing and a velocity of 1.

Player 2 (Federation) Deployment:

One *Spear* (spaceship counter A) with two arsenal pods, one battle communications pod, one tractor pod, one crew pod, and one energy pod. Two *Swords* (counters B and

C), each with two heavy weapons pods, one battle communications pod, one battlecraft pod, (with a *Terwillicker-X*) and an energy pod. All ships begin in hex 0101 of map C facing any direction and with a velocity of 7.

Victory Conditions:

The B'Mali player must destroy two of the Federation ships or he loses. Also, in order to win he must keep all Federation ships from landing on the planet. The Federation player wins if he lands any ship on the planet.

SCENARIO 7: Battle of Tau-Kati

Not long after the Federation took control of Tau-Kati, the Federation scouts encountered an alien patrol ship. Though communications were attempted, the aliens proved hostile, firing on the scouts who barely were able to escape safely into hyperspace. Now the aliens are sending a fleet into human space. For the first time, two cultures will meet in combat to determine the fate of two expanding hegemonies.

Map Deployment:

A	B	C

Player 1 (Alien) Deployment:

The Alien player gets 14 ships equivalent to the *Terwillicker-X*. These ships never expend Energy Units (though they are considered to carry the normal number of units as indicated on the Spaceship Attribute Chart, 4.9) unless they receive damage to their engines. The ships then suffer all penalties for such damage to their engines. All ships are deployed within two hexes of 0707 on Map A facing in any direction and with a velocity from 1 to 6. (**Note:** Players may wish to experiment with other alien vessels as oulined in the accompanying module.)

Player 2 (Federation) Deployment:

Three *Swords* (spaceship counters A, B and C) each with one arsenal pod, one heavy weapons pod, one battle communications pod, one energy pod, and one tractor beam pod. All ships start within 1 hex of 0707 on Map C with any facing and an initial velocity from 2 to 5.
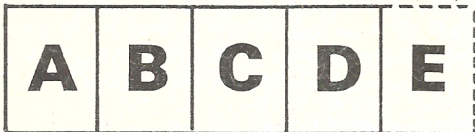
Victory Conditions:

The first player to destroy more than 50% of the other player's ships automatically becomes the winner.

SCENARIO 8: The Bomb

The terrorist organization, *Basqua Revista,* has secretly manufactured a hydrogen bomb in the prison colony on Ganymede and has commandeered one transfer and one guard ship to transport the bomb to earth. They threaten to destroy the Federation headquarters unless their demands are met. Inside sources on Ganymede were able to alert the Federation in time, and now a hastily assembled fleet is being sent out to intercept the terrorists and save earth.

Map Deployment:

A	B	C	D	E

Note: Earth is in hex 0707 on Map E.

Player 1 (Terrorist) Deployment:

One Corco *Gamma* (spaceship counter A) with three battlecraft pods (with a *Terwillicker-X* battlecraft) and one *Piccolo* (counter B) with one buffered cargo pod. The ships are deployed facing in any direction in hex 0808 on Map A with a velocity of 3.

Player 2 (Federation) Deployment:

Two *Daggers* (spaceship counters A and B) with a heavy weapon pod and a crew pod each. On each turn after the Terrorists have fired their first shot (either particle, laser, or missile, but *not* a shot from the battlecraft), the Federation player rolls a 10-sided die twice. On each roll of 1, another *Dagger* (counters may have to be created) appears on hex 0707 of map E (earth) with any facing and a velocity of 0; each new *Dagger* contains an arsenal pod and an energy pod. (**Note:** Players will have to move Map A to the position of Map E when all ships have left Map A.)

Victory Conditions:

The Federation player must destroy the cargo pod on the *Piccolo* before the ship enters into earth's orbit. The Terrorist player wins if the *Piccolo* enters earth's hex with the cargo pod intact (he does not have to land the ship in order to win).

SCENARIO 9: Firepower

Posedy, a large military contractor, has built a ship they claim can beat any other ship ever made. The Federation authorities, dubious at best over the claim, offer Posedy the chance to prove this boast by putting down the continually rebellious citizens of Hai-Katu 4.

CRAFT AND PODS COST CHART

SHIP TYPE	COST (IN TRANS)
Terwillicker-5000	3,100
Terwillicker-X	6,900
Dagger	12,200
Sword	22,100
Spear	27,900
Piccolo	5,400
Flute	20,700
Clarinet	14,100
Corco Gamma	6,700
Corco Zeta	6,400
Corco Iota	17,500
Corco Mu	14,500
Corco Omega	1,000
PODS	
Arsenal	5,000
Battlecraft (pod only)	500
Communications	3,000
Energy	250
Heavy Weapon	3,000
Hunter	2,000
Light Weapon	1,700
Jump	1,500
Tractor Beam	2,500
Crew	100

HIT TABLE

FIRST DIE	SECOND DIE:	1–2	3–4	5–6	7–8	9–10
				Part of Target Hit		
1		Critical	–	–	–	–
2		Bridge	Engine	Bridge	Engine	–
3		Forcefield	Pod 8	Pod 16	Pod 24	Pod 32
4		Pod 1	Pod 9	Pod 17	Pod 25	Pod 33
5		Pod 2	Pod 10	Pod 18	Pod 26	Pod 34
6		Pod 3	Pod 11	Pod 19	Pod 27	Pod 35
7		Pod 4	Pod 12	Pod 20	Pod 28	Pod 36
8		Pod 5	Pod 13	Pod 21	Pod 29	Pod 37
9		Pod 6	Pod 14	Pod 22	Pod 30	Pod 38
10		Pod 7	Pod 15	Pod 23	Pod 31	Pod 39

When a ship is hit, roll a 10-sided die to determine which row of the Hit Table to use. Roll the die again and cross-reference the second die result with the first number rolled to find where the ship was hit. If a ship does not have sufficient pods to match the number rolled, roll the second die again until one of the pods on the ship is hit. – = No effect.

Note: Players may wish to substitute this Hit Table in place of the table that appears in *DeltaVee*.

HEAVY CRUISER AND TRANSPORT

The two ships covered in this section were the ultimate products of the Federation's weaponry. The Military Transport could carry one entire fleet, and the Heavy Cruiser *was* an entire fleet's worth of weaponry. As the Federation's territory expanded and potential hot spots developed, nine Cruisers were finally commissioned. For over three hundred years these Cruisers, accompanied by the Transports with their complement of *Swords* to act as scouts, preserved peace throughout the Federation space.

No scenarios have been included for these ships, since they proved to be all but invincible in combat (when used properly). Players are encouraged to create their own scenarios if they wish to test the limits of these space dreadnoughts. Players should use the Hit Table at lower left when using these ships in battle in addition to the Heavy Cruiser Hit Table and Missile Hit Chart in this section.

Each Heavy Cruiser has four independent forcefields, which should be numbered on the Spaceship Log. Whenever a forcefield is hit as indicated on the

ALIEN ENCOUNTERS

The scenarios included in *DeltaVee* (and in this article) take place in human occupied space. No alien races have yet been discovered, though such an encounter is inevitable as exploration ships continue to chart unknown stellar systems. Players who wish to experiment with possible alien spaceships in combat may create scenarios using the ships described in this module.

Ram Jet

The alien culture which designed this ship has not yet achieved hyperjump ability for interstellar travel. Existing within a closely packed stellar cluster, they have instead developed travel by ram jet, which takes much more time for transit from one system to the next. The ram jet uses a vast electronic grid to trap the hydrogen atoms that exist in the interstellar medium. The hydrogen is either stored for later interplanetary travel or burned directly by fusion in the massive ram jets.

This alien vessel does not use pods. To interpret how damage applies from the Hit Table, use the following modifications: 1) if a result is rolled for a *bridge, engine* or *forcefield* hit, it is considered a **hull** hit and treated like a bridge hit on normal ships; 2) if a result is rolled for a hit on *Pods 1–5*, it is considered a **grid** hit and is treated like an engine hit on a normal ship; 3) if any other Pod number is rolled, it is considered a **miss** and there is no damage involved (the human player

Hit Table, roll a 10-sided die to determine which forcefield is affected on the Heavy Cruiser Forcefield Table. If one or more forcefields is destroyed on a Heavy Cruiser and a missile subsequently hits the ship, refer to the Missile Hit Chart to determine which pods are destroyed. In addition, the player must spread three additional hits over the Heavy Cruiser as per 9.8, using the accompanying Hit Table.

MISSILE HIT CHART

#1 Destroys Engines, Bridge, and Pods 1–10.
#2 Destroys Pods 11–20.
#3 Destroys Pods 21–30.
#4 Destroys Pods 31–40.

If a missile hits a Heavy Cruiser, each area not protected by an intact forcefield is destroyed. **Example:** If Forcefield #2 is destroyed, a missile hit would destroy Pods 11–20, though the other forcefields would not suffer immediate destruction. However, the player must also roll for three additional hits on the Hit Table, as per 9.8 of the *DeltaVee* rules.

HEAVY CRUISER FORCEFIELD HIT TABLE

DIE	FORCEFIELD HIT
1	1
2	1
3	1
4	2
5	2
6	3
7	3
8	4
9	4
10	Roll twice (circuitry hit)

When a forcefield is hit on the Hit Table, roll a 10-sided die. The number indicates which of the four forcefields was affected. If a 10 is rolled, then massive circuitry damage has occurred; roll the die twice more to determine the two forcefields affected. If another 10 is rolled during this process, two more forcefields are affected. It is possible for a multitude of forcefields to be affected by this process.

CRUISER/TRANSPORT ATTRIBUTE CHART

ATTRIBUTES	HEAVY CRUISER	MILITARY TRANSPORT
Cost	Classified	Classified
Number of Pods	39	39
Velocity Rating	1	1
Maneuver Rating	3	2
Energy Capacity	288	264
Energy Burn Rate	24	24
Streamlined	No	No
Burster Class	2	1
Armor Class	2	1
Forcefield Class	2	1
Civ Level	8	7
Target Program	−6	−4
Number of Forcefields	4	1
Storage Pod Ability*	Yes	Yes

*A Storage Pod takes up four pods worth of space on a ship. It can store any other military ship (except another Heavy Cruiser or Transport Vehicle), which may be launched following the same procedure as launching battlecraft. □ □

does not roll the die a second time as indicated in the instruction for the Hit Table).

Other specifications for the alien ram jet are given in the accompanying chart. (**Note:** The ram jet has one forcefield.)

Solarship

Another slow interstellar form of travel, this alien ship uses a large, thin, reflective sail to gather the light from a star to propel it through space. It too is used primarily by alien cultures in tightly packed stellar clusters. Since travel is so slow, taking hundreds of years per transit, these cultures rely heavily on robots to handle the craft during their long trips. Only one such ship has ever entered human occupied space; the guiding robots immediately opened fire on the scout ship, forcing the crew to return fire. The ship was destroyed and its point of origin never properly established.

In combat the solarship has damage applied to it using the modifications as specified for the ram jet. Other specifications are listed in the accompanying chart.

Modular Ship

These alien vessels are really a number of individual pods which are loosely connected and which can act independently. In battle the pods break apart and act like individual ships, or they can keep bunched together as the alien commander wishes. Due to the mind link technique developed by this species, the individual

pods are able to attack as one; however, they are disadvantaged in that if one pod leader is hurt, the others also share his distress and ship's damage.

Each ship is made up of a variable number of pods. To interpret how damage applies from the Hit Table, use the following modifications: 1) if a result is rolled for a *bridge, engine,* or *forcefield* hit, it is considered a *miss*; and there is no effect; 2) if a result is rolled for a hit on *any of the Pods* of the ship, then *all* the Pods will suffer the same damage (thus, if the ship were composed of 4 Pods, then each Pod would take the same damage if the human player rolls a 1, 2, 3 or 4); if any other Pod number above the number actually composing the ship is rolled, it is considered a *miss* and no damage is taken (the human player does not roll the die a second time).

Each pod has the same specifications as indicated in the accompanying chart.

Pulsor

The alien culture which developed this ship has never established communications with humans. Though several of these ships have been sighted, none has ever been caught or studied thoroughly. These ships have been called the "ghosties" and "Flying Dutchmen" by humans; the few readings gathered by pilots seem to indicate that these ships are pure energy. Standing Federation Orders state that no ship will fire on these pulsors, though an occassional hot shot pilot has

been known to let loose a few laser blasts at the strange vessels...all to no effect.

The pulsor is known to have a velocity rating and maneuver rating of **10**, and the one observation of its fire power (destroying an asteroid in the ship's path) indicates that it has a burster class of at least **2**. No other specifications have been determined (the ship is too atypical for the standard *DeltaVee* system).

ALIEN SPACESHIP ATTRIBUTE CHART

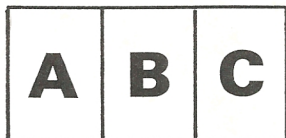| ATTRIBUTES	RAM JET	SOLARSHIP	MODULAR SHIP[1]
Number of Pods	See 2	See 2	See 3
Velocity Rating	2	4	4
Maneuver Rating	3	4	7
Energy Capacity	See 4	See 4	288
Energy Burn Rate	See 4	See 4	12
Streamlined	yes	yes	yes
Burster Class	1	2	2
Armor Class	1	2	2
Forcefield Class	1	1	2
Civ Level	8	7	8
Target Program	−4	−6	−6

Notes:

1. Each Pod of the Modular Ship has these specifications.
2. These ships do not have pods.
3. The Modular Ship has a variable number of pods, depending on the size of ship encountered.
4. These ships are always considered to have sufficient fuel to function throughout the length of any battle. ■ ■

DELTA VEE ENHANCED [continued from page 26]

Map Deployment:

A	B	C

Player 1 (Posedy) Deployment:

One Corco *Mu* (spaceship counter A) with ten arsenal pods, one battle communications pod and one energy pod. The ship is set up facing any direction in hex 0707 on Map A with a velocity of 5. (**Note:** All pods and the hull have an armor level of 2. Also, the ship has a forcefield of 2.) One *Dagger* (counter B) with one energy pod and one crew pod. This ship enters in hex 0707 on Map A under the following condition: If at any time the energy pod on the *Mu* is damaged or has used up all its energy, the *Dagger* may be brought on to refuel the ship. The *Dagger* may transfer its energy pod to the *Mu* if it is in the same hex with the other ship for one friendly Movement Phase. The *Mu* must jettison one of its pods to be able to accept the new energy pod (a destroyed pod fulfills this condition).

Player 2 (Hai-Katu) Deployment:

Three Corco *Gamma* (spaceship counters A, B and C) each with a light weapon pod and two buffered cargo pods. Two Corco *Zetas* (counters D and E) each with a hunter pod, a light weapons pod, a crew pod, two buffered cargo pods and an energy pod. One Corco *Iota* (this counter must be created) with two hunter pods, a tractor beam pod, three buffered cargo pods, a crew pod, an energy pod and a jump pod. One Corco *Mu* (this counter must be created) with two light weapons pods, two hunter pods, a battlecraft pod (with a *Terwillicker-5000* battlecraft), a tractor beam pod, four buffered cargo pods, and two crew pods. These ships are deployed anywhere on Map C facing any direction, and with a velocity from 1 to 4.

Victory Conditions:

For each ship the Posedy player destroys, he receives one Victory Point. If the *Dagger* resupply ship is brought into play, the Posedy player loses one Victory Point. If his ship has more than six pods *damaged*, he loses 2 Victory Points. If more than three pods are *destroyed*, he loses 2 Victory Points more. If the *Mu* is destroyed, the Posedy player automatically loses. The Posedy player wins if he has 2 Victory Points by the end of the game. (**Note:** The game continues until one side is completely destroyed; it is thus possible for the Posedy player to have at least two Victory Points, but still lose the game if his ship is destroyed.)
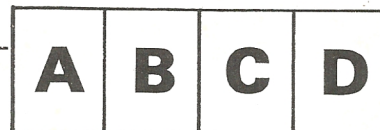
SCENARIO 10: The Chess Players

Marjan and Gandapor are multi-billionaires who have built far-flung financial empires. Usually acting outside Federation laws, the two men have been known to do anything to make an extra Tran or two. Frequent raids on each other's shipping has lately caused such strain that each man is determined to eliminate the quasi-military fleets of his rival. The two assembled fleets meet near Beta Hydra to determine which empire will come out on top.

Each player has 175,000 Trans with which to build a fleet using the accompanying Craft and Pod Cost Chart. Each player should keep his fleet secret until the combat begins; at the end of the game players should examine each other's expenditures to make sure the opponent is more honest than the billionaire he is representing. If a player cheats, he automatically loses.

Map Deployment:

A	B	C	D

Player 1 Deployment:

Before ships are set up, the player secretly writes down one hex number on any map. When play is ready to begin, the player sets up his fleet within one hex of the hex chosen, facing in any direction and with a velocity of 1 to 4.
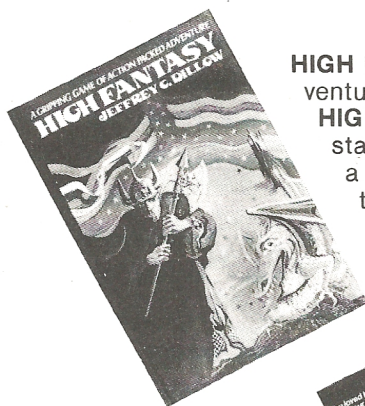
Player 2 Deployment:

The second player sets up his fleet following the same directions as those for the first player.
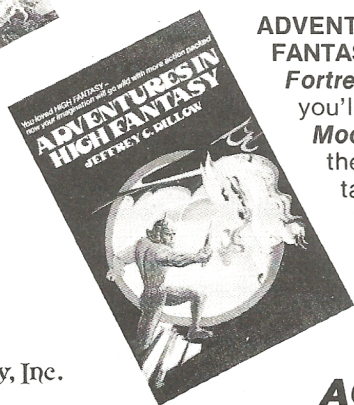
Victory Conditions:

The first player to destroy his opponent's fleet entirely is the winner. ■ ■