

# CounterSpace

## a CGME-based game of space combat

Version 2004.5.19

### **The Basics**

*Captian's Log, star date 127 dot 0 dot 0 dot 1. We' e been traveling through this sector for... oh, at least 4 turn. Navigation Officer Sue Lu reports that we are approaching the edge of this map, and that within 6 turns we should be arriving on the next one. An Ooblianiid battleship is in pursuit of us, only 5 or 6 hexes away, and we can only hope that they won't attempt to follow us as we cross over...*

CounterSpace (a.k.a., CSpace) is a game for the CounterMoves' Generic Microgame Engine (CGME), representing space-opera-style interstellar combat. It can be downloaded for free from it' s home page:

<http://countermoves.sourceforge.net/CounterSpace/>

99.9% of the spaceship graphics in this set were created by Todd Zircher, for use in his V\_MAP gameset for *Full Thrust*, and may be distributed freely for non-commercial purposes. Todd and his works can be found at:

<http://zircher.iwarp.com/>

All other content in this game, including the game board, is released into the Public Domain.

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#### **1.0.0 Introduction**

In front of you lies a piece of paper. The majority of the paper is black, with small white dots dispersed randomly across it's surface. Overlaid across the "space" is a white hexagonal grid, with a number in each hex. Upon it' s surface, each within the confines of one hexagonal cell, are small cardstock pieces with pictures of what appear to be spaceships. This place is... CounterSpace.

CounterSpace is a game based on the CounterMoves Generic Microgame Engine (CGME), simulating interstellar combat and exploration.

What exactly you are doing in CounterSpace is up to you. Perhaps you' e fighting the villainous Empire or stomping out those pesky Rebels. Perhaps you are holding off the invasion of the Ooblianiids, or perhaps you' re jst trying to get your shipload of beer to the other side of CounterSpace.

Whatever you' e doing in CounterSpace, someone out there doesn' t wat you to do it, and they' re wlling to try to blow up your ships in order to keep you from it. And, of course, you' re trying to blow them up as well, so it's all fair and all. Nobody really dies in the game, and that's a great thing about it. They' e just paper people, with paper families, not real people. And the ships are cheap models, we promise. Look- you can even see the strings.

#### **1.1.0 Background**

The premise: we live in a violent future, practically trillions of years from now. Take your ships and use them to blow up the ships of other players.

## 1.2.0 Requirements

CGME Core Rules, available via <http://countermoves.sourceforge.net/CGME/>

## 1.3.0 Scale and Stacking

1 hex = 42.42 deridicons

1 turn = 42.42E42 partswanafoos

Given that, it is reasonable to assume that any number of units may stack in one hex, and there can be plenty of space to avoid other enemies within a hex, under normal circumstances. Players may wish, for playability reasons, to limit the number of units which may stack in any given hex, and are free to come up with their own rules regarding passing through hexes containing enemy ships. Aside from playability reasons, stacking limits can change strategies significantly. Some suggestions for potential limits:

- Two capital ships per hex, or any number of fighters.
- 5 ships per hex, regardless of type.

## 1.4.0 Rule Precedence

When these rules conflict with real life (laws of inertia, etc.), follow this list of precedents, from lowest to highest priority:

1. CGME Core rules
2. CounterSpace rules
3. Scenario rules
4. Referee, if applicable
5. Having Fun.

## 2.0.0 Turns

Turn Summary:

1. Active player selects a unit. This becomes the “active unit”, and all other units are non-active.

**1.1 Energy phase.** The active unit replenishes energy equal to its E pool. Energy in excess of the E pool may be spilled over into shields. Any additional E is lost. The unit may freely transfer energy between shields and their E Pool during this phase, and only during this phase.

**1.2 Action Phase.** Movement and Combat may be declared at any point during this phase. Units may attack “in the middle of a move,” so to say.

2. Repeat above steps for each of the active player's units, in any order.

3. Repeat the above steps for each player.

4. End of turn.

### 2.1.0 Initiative

Determining the order in which players or ships act in a turn can be done a number of ways. The default is what is commonly known as “Igo Hugo” (“I go, you go”). Using this method, players determine once, at the beginning of a game, who will go first each turn, and then turns commence in an Igo Hugo fashion.

Other options include:

- Roll for initiative each turn. The team with the highest roll goes first that turn. Re-roll ties.
- Roll for each ship. The ships go in the order of initiative, from highest to lowest. Players may want to give each class of ship an initiative modifier, to represent that some ships inherently act more quickly or slowly than others.

When using Igo Hugo there will be cases in which a battle essentially cannot be won. For example, two battleships facing each other without the support of other ships are likely to take a very long time before one of them is finally defeated, and any defeat is likely to be the result of critical hits. Thus using another initiative approach is recommended. Players are free to use any approach they like, as long as all players agree to the approach before play starts.

### **3.0.0 Energy (“E”)**

Energy is required to power a ship' s weapon systems and shields. Ship movement is governed by other power sources, which may only be tapped for other uses in dire emergencies (not covered in these rules). Also factored in to E are the generic resources available for attack and defense of a unit.

Each unit has an Energy Pool ("E", "E pool" or "E rating"). This tells the player how many energy point that unit gets at the start of it's Energy Phase. It is also the maximum amount of energy the unit may store at one time (not counting energy invested in shields or special systems). E is spent during a turn to power ship systems, and may be saved from turn to turn, but a unit's current E may never be higher than it's starting E.

E may be expended in any of the following ways.

- E may be transferred between a ship' s systems as defined in the Energy Phase rules, above.
- Firing a weapon or using an on-board system may cost E, and the system may not be used if it's E cost is not paid from the unit's E pool. A system may normally be used any number of times in a turn, provided enough energy is available to power it.
- Powering special abilities, as defined in a unit's, or on-board system's, description may cost E.

### **4.0.0 Movement**

Movement is taken as described in the Turn Summary, above. A unit may declare combat at any point during it's movement, and this does not affect the unit' s movement. The attack is resolved before movement continues, and the attacker may declare any number of attacks before continuing movement. Unless specified otherwise, a unit is never compelled to move.

### **5.0.0 Terrain**

While space is known for having nothing in it, there are some things out there which may pose a hazard to intrepid battleship admirals. However, rarely will anything directly impede the movement of a ship.

#### **5.1.0 Terrain Types**

All combat happens in space, normally without terrain. However, even space has to have something in it. While most of these things are insignificant for combat purposes, a few of them hold special interest for your pilots.

##### **5.1.1 Hazard Hexes**

Some hexes are Hazard hexes, as defined in the CGME core rules. Some examples include:

Asteroids are a definite hazard, and something to avoid. They normally have a Hazard rating between 0 and 6. ("The odds of successfully navigating an asteroid field are...")

Mine fields are, despite several interplanetary conventions to the contrary, rather common in CounterSpace. Some mine fields are "active", and treated more or less like stationary units, whereas others are "passive", and treated as Hazard hexes.

### 5.1.2 Planets

Units may only occupy a Planet hex by landing, effectively removing themselves from space combat. Most scenarios do not have Planets.

### 5.1.3 Stars

Stars are large, shiny objects sometimes seen in CounterSpace. They range in size from one hex to many hexes, and their exact effect on ships varies per scenario. In general, however, any unit which enters a hex containing a star is immediately destroyed. Hexes in the vicinity of a star may or may not be Hazards, as defined in the scenario.

### 5.2.0 Structures

You wouldn't believe what kind of stuff mankind (and alienkind) has built out in space in the future. These installations have normal statistics like any other ship, though they normally don't move. Examples include beam and torpedo platforms, the famous Alpha star base, and The Universal Joint, a meeting place of bounty hunters, merchants, and pirates.

Players will certainly come up with their own ideas for space structures.

## 6.0.0 Combat

Now that you've flown all that way, you've gotta blow something up.

Combat uses normal CGME mechanics, with the following notes:

- At RNG 0, all attacks are at +1 ATT for to-hit purposes. Damage is unaffected (the reason for this rule is to keep small swarms of Fighter-class ships from quickly overwhelming capital ships).
- Units may freely move through hexes containing friendly or enemy units, but see Point Defense in section 6.2.0.
- Due to the amazing speeds and trajectories at which space combat happens, attacks may not be combined in any way (not even from weapons system on the same ship) unless otherwise noted in a unit's description.

Most ships have one or more weapons systems. They are noted very abstractly, in the form "a1r2e2", meaning ATT 1, RNG 2, with an E cost of 2. A weapon may fire any number of times in the unit's Action Phase, as long as the E cost can be paid to use it.

A successful attack is treated as follows:

- A "Destroy" result deals damage equal to the weapon's ATT score. A "Wound" result deals ½ ATT in damage.
- Damage is subtracted from the target's shields. If the shields are reduced to zero, remaining damage is applied to the hull.

Once a ship's Hull is down to one half of its starting value, the ship has taken significant damage and its E rating is immediately cut in half (use normal mathematical rounding rules). When Hull reaches zero the ship is destroyed, and may be removed from the board. Alternately, players may leave its hulk on the board – it has no effect on play

unless a scenario specifies otherwise (e.g., perhaps a boarding operation is worth victory points).

### **6.0.1 Optional Rule: Alternate Damage Mechanic**

If players agree, use the following formula to determine damage from an attack:

Damage = the difference between the ATT and DEF rolls

Thus, an attack which succeeds by 4 would apply 4 damage to the defender. In this case it is important to remember that the +1 ATT for RNG 0 does not apply to damage, which also means that it is technically possible to hit a ship and do no damage to it.

The down-side to this mechanic is that it allows fighter-class ships to potentially deal major damage to capital ships.

### **6.0.2 Optional Rule: Critical Hits**

When an attacker rolls a 6 and the defender rolls a 1 it is a critical hit, and always hits, regardless of any difference in ATT and DEF. There are several ways to treat critical hits, and players may agree on any method they choose. Here are some suggestions:

1. Do not treat them specially: the attack does normal damage.
2. Attack does double damage. This is the default, if players do not agree on another method in advance.
3. Attack bypasses any shields, going directly to the hull.
4. Attack does an extra 1d6 damage, regardless of the ATT score of the attack. This approach allows, for example, a fighter-class ship to land potentially huge damage against a capital ship, but could also be abused via “weenie tactics”, where the attacker takes a large fleet of fighters in the hopes of increasing the overall odds of rolling critical hits.

### **6.1.0 The Rule of Two**

The advanced technologies of the future have targeting down to an art. Thus, essentially, almost all targets are equally hard to hit. Of course, defense tries to keep up, and does a pretty good job. Thus we speak now the Rule of Two: unless specified otherwise, assume a DEF score of 2. There will be many exceptions - this is simply the default.

### **6.2.0 Point Defense**

Weapons systems with a range of *exactly* 0 or 1 may be used as point defense systems. Thus, an A1R1 weapon system may be used in Point Defense, but an A1R2 system may not.

When a unit enters the hex of a PD-capable enemy unit, the enemy unit may immediately declare an attack with any amount of PD weaponry, paying full E cost and applying any modifiers for combat at range zero. If the moving unit also declares an attack at that time, the attacks are resolved simultaneously. Thus it is possible for the attacker and defender to eliminate each other.

Point Defense is a special case, and may only be declared when a unit first moves into another unit's hex. It may not be declared against units starting their movement phase in an enemy-occupied hex unless they leave the hex and return. PD weapons may of course be used at any time a target is within range, but only use the special Point Defense rules when an enemy first enters a hex.

### **6.3.0 Missiles and Torpedoes**

Missiles and torpedoes fall into a category of weaponry that is treated differently than energy weapons. Torpedoes and missiles are the same thing for game purposes, and the words can be used interchangeably.

For most purposes torpedoes are treated similarly to ships, except that they may have a Range (RNG) attribute. This attribute defines the maximum number of hexes a torpedo may move before it becomes ineffective.

This list describes the special case rules for torpedoes:

- Any successful attack against a torpedo – Wound or Destroy – destroys it immediately without detonating it.
- Non-point-defense weaponry may not target torpedoes.
- A torpedo's target need not be chosen until it actually moves into the target's hex.
- After a torpedo has expended MOV points equal to its RNG it is destroyed. It may attack a unit in its final hex, but is harmlessly destroyed if it does not make an attack before moving its maximum range.
- Torpedoes must move their whole MOV every turn, even if they spend it all in one hex. (Option: smart torpedoes do not have this restriction, and may “hover” indefinitely.)
- A torpedo which is destroyed as a result of Point Defense fire does not get to attack its target - it is destroyed before it can get close enough to deliver its payload.
- When a ship enters a hex containing a torpedo, the torpedo may not make a Point Defense attack, but the ship may make a PD attack against the torpedo, assuming it has PD-capable weaponry.
- Torpedoes may not be fired in Point Defense.
- Torpedoes get no +1 ATT bonus at range zero.
- Torpedoes which are explicitly labeled as Energy Torpedoes may not be targeted by Point Defense weaponry nor otherwise destroyed by weapons fire.

### 6.3.1 Torpedo Bays

Units carrying torpedoes will normally have a number of torpedo bays. A unit may not fire more torpedoes per turn than it has torpedo bays. Torpedoes and bays in a ship may not normally be destroyed without destroying the ship, though there are also ships on which the bays may be targeted without affecting the ship as a whole.

Torpedoes or bays with a DEF score may be attacked independently of their ship, and any hit destroys them. They may not be targeted until the target unit's shields are reduced to zero.

## 7.0.0 Units

Units are normally individual ships or space-based emplacements. Ships range in size from Pretty Damned Small to Pretty Damned Big, and carry a wide variety of strange and interesting weaponry with which to blast thine enemies into smithereens.

Below is a sample list of common ships and combat emplacements. These are only samples, and players are encouraged to adjust them as they see fit. This game comes with a collection of unlabeled counters which can be printed out and used to represent a variety of ships.

<i>Unit</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>Shields</i>	<i>Hull</i>	<i>DEF</i>	<i>MOV</i>	<i>Weapons &amp; Notes</i>
Torp Platform	0	0	1	1	0	1 bay, 4 torps: ATT 4 MOV 3 RNG 6 A stationary emplacement similar to mines.
Mines	1	0	1	1	0	a1r1e1
Poh Fighter	1	0	1	2	3	a1r1e1

<i>Unit</i>	<i>E</i>	<i>Shields</i>	<i>Hull</i>	<i>DEF</i>	<i>MOV</i>	<i>Weapons &amp; Notes</i>
Poh Defender	2	1	1	2	3	a1r1e1. May combine into a single A2 attack for 2 E.
Wazza Fighter	2	1	1	2	3	a1r1e1. May combine into a single A2 attack for 2 E.
Gunship	3	3	6	2	3	a1r1e1, a2r2e2
Destroyer	4	4	10	3	2	a1r1e1, a2r3e2, a3r2e2
Battleship	6	6	12	4	2	a1r1e1, a2r3e2, a3r2e2, a4r3e4 1 Torp Bay: DEF 3 4 Torps: ATT 4 MOV 3 RNG 6
Dreadnaught	10	8	18	4	2	a1r1e1, a2r3e2, a3r2e2, a4r3e4 2 Torp Bays: DEF 3 8 Torps: ATT 4 MOV 3 RNG 6
Star Base Alpha	8	4	20	3	0	a1r1e1, a2r2e2, a4r3e4 2 Torp Bay: DEF 3 8 Torps: ATT 4 MOV 3 RNG 6

A note about the low MOV scores of units: this game was designed with European A4-sized gaming maps in mind, and thus the MOV scores are kept low to keep such maps from being too small for normal play. Players using larger maps may feel compelled to increase these numbers – go right ahead and do so.

Players should feel free to invent their own ships. One example of a customized ship is shown here:

### 7.0.1 The Thousand Year Bird

The Thousand Year Bird is a small, quasi-legendary cargo ship piloted by the rogue Hans Solar.

E3 SH2 HP4 MOV3 Weapons: a1r1e1

Specials:

- May combine it's E into a single attack of A2 or A3, similarly to Wazza Fighters.
- May trade energy for MOV: each point of E gives one extra MOV. This may be spent at any time during the Action Phase, and may only be drawn from the E pool (not from shields).

### 7.1.0 Ship Records

While a normal piece of paper will do for keeping track of a ship's status, CounterSpace comes with some handy record forms. The first type is designed to be placed in trading-card sleeves, and using dry-erase markers to mark them during play. Alternately, there is a multi-ship spreadsheet-like chart for keeping track of stats turn-to-turn.

Another useful technique is to draw a grid on a notecard or piece of paper which looks something like this:

Ship:			
Energy:			
Shields:			

Hull:				
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In the Ship cells put a copy of ship's counter. In the other cells use pennies – or some other small, stackable item such as poker chips – to represent the current state of the ship. As E is used and replenished, remove and add pennies.

### 8.0.0 Sample Rules Additions

This section gives a short description of hypothetical rules expansions for CounterSpace.

#### 8.1.0 Special Equipment

The following devices may be placed on ships to improve their chances of survival in hostile space:

##### 8.1.1 E Battery

Effectively increases the maximum amount of E a unit may store. Does not affect recharge rate. Exact amount of E it may store depends on the scenario, ship, or any number of other factors.

##### 8.1.2 Drive Booster

Units equipped with these may, during their Action Phase, expend 1E to get 1 extra MOV. Unless other rules place restrictions on it, any number of E may be spent this way.

##### 8.1.3 “Turtle” Shields

During the Energy Phase of a unit's turn it may spend E to power this item. Each E invested gives the unit a +1 DEF until the end of the next *full* turn. Just as the shields help prevent attacks from coming in, they also make it more difficult to make attacks from the unit: for each E invested apply -1 ATT to all attacks initiated from the unit, with the effect lasting as long as the +1 DEF effect does. Note that torpedo ATT scores are not affected by this penalty, as they do not attack until they strike a target. Instead, torpedoes fired from the unit must expend 1 extra MOV per E invested in the Turtle Shield in order to be able to pass through it. That is, with a Turtle Shield activated with 2E, a torpedo must expend 2 MOV just to move out through the shield, not including any additional MOV it may need in order to move from the ship's hex. This MOV penalty does not apply to incoming torpedoes – they are affected by the DEF adjustment instead.

#### 8.2.0 Intergalactical Red Cross

The IRC maintains a fleet of ships which serve to repair other ships. Some of their ships are described below. Because the IRC is unwilling to directly intervene during combat, many factions have created similar ships for their own fleets.

##### 8.2.1 “Cleric” class repair ship

E4 SH3 HP6 MOV3 Weapons: a1r1e1

This modified gunship moves around the battlefield repairing damaged ships.

If a Cleric and another friendly ship spend their whole turn in the same hex, and neither ship initiates an attack, the Cleric may, at the end of the turn, expend X E to repair X Hull on the other ship. For example, it may spend 3 E to repair 3 Hull.

Clerics may not repair themselves, and may not make repairs on more than one ship per turn.

##### 8.2.2 “Battery” class support ship

E2 SH2 HP6 MOV3 Weapons: a1r1e1

This modified gunship carries a 6E-capacity battery with which to recharge friendly ships during battle. During its Energy Phase it may transfer any amount of the battery's remaining E to a ship in its same hex. This ship's own E pool may be used to recharge this extra battery. This ship may only transfer energy from the extra battery during the E phase, and may not make use of it during other phases of the turn.

### **8.2.3 “Docmobile” class repair ship**

E6 SH4 HP8 DEF3 MOV2 Weapons: a1r1e1

The Docmobile is a modified destroyer which may repair ships as a Cleric does and recharge them as a Battery does - see those ships' descriptions for full details.

## **8.3.0 Space Races**

CounterSpace is populated by a large number of space-faring species. Some of them are briefly described here.

### **8.3.1 Sprogs**

Sprogs are a race of mechanical constructs – intelligent robots.

All Sprog ships with a starting Hull of 4 or more have the ability to automatically repair 1 HP per turn, applied at the start of their turns.

### **8.3.2 Bruets**

Bruets are a race which likes nothing more than to bear down on an enemy with a good blaster cannon. Bruet ships get +1 ATT on all E-based attacks (e.g., not torpedoes).

### **8.3.3 Turtles**

The “turtle s” are named for the Terran animals which they superficially resemble. All Turtle ships gets +50% HP and +50% Shields, but suffer a -1 MOV penalty.

## **8.4.0 Spicing up Scenarios**

This section lists some additions which have been shown to make space combat a bit more strategic than wide-open space normally allows for.

### **8.4.1 Line of Sight (LOS)**

Certain space features, like planets, may optionally block line of sight (LOS). To see if a unit has a clear LOS to a target, draw a line from the center of the attacker's hex to the center of the defender's hex. If the line goes through an obstacle hex then the shot is blocked.

### **8.4.2 Obstacles**

Before play starts, place a number of coins randomly around the map. Assuming the default map which comes with this game, 6-8 coins is a good number. Place them near the middle of the map, with 2-3 hexes between each one.

These obstacles can be explained however the players like: gravity wells, impassible space anomalies, black holes, or whatever.

Effects on play:

1. Units may not pass through obstacles. Alternately, obstacles may be Hazards of any level the players wish (perhaps random: roll 1d6 when a ship enters the hex, and treat the result as the Hazard level).
2. Obstacles block line of sight – see above. Note that torpedoes may of course move around obstacles.

### 8.4.3 Initiative

Rolling for initiative each turn greatly changes the dynamic of the game compared to an Igo Huge ordering (see section 2.1.0).

### 9.0.0 Scenarios

Below are some scenarios for CounterSpace. Note that they are not clearly balanced, and may need some tweaking before both teams are evenly represented. See section 8.4 for some ideas on how to make the scenarios more interesting.

#### 9.1.0 Minor Slugfest

An introductory battle...

Players each get one Battleship and one Destroyer.

Setup: Player 1 enters first, from any one side of the board. Player 2 enter on the opposite side, after Player 1 has finished his first turn. To speed play it is recommended that the width of the board be used, not the length (assuming it is rectangular).

The last player with surviving ships wins.

Note that if the two battleships are left to face each other alone the battle is likely to take a long, long time. Recommended optional rules are Critical Hits and a non-Igo Hugo initiative system, such that it is possible for a given player to go twice in a row - last on one turn and first on the next. See section 2.1.0 for some suggestions on determining initiative each turn.

#### 9.2.0 Raid on Ooblanawa Outpost

High Command has determined that the supply outpost at Ooblanawa II is "strategically important"...

Attacker: 1 Battleship, 1 Gunship, 2 Wazza Fighters

Defender: 1 Destroyer, 3 Poh Defenders, 3 Gunships, plus 1 special unit:

Small Command Station: immobile, no attack, Shields 3 , E 3, Hull 6

Setup: Defender sets up anywhere within 5 hexes of one side of the map. Attacker then enters along the opposite side.

Attacker wins if he can get a ship into the Command Station' s ~~dx~~ and keep it there (no enemy ships left). Neither the attacker nor defender may attack the station.

#### 9.3.0 Star Base Assault

A handful of capital ships take on a defended starbase.

Defender: 1 Star Base Alpha:

E 8, Shields 4, Hull 20, MOV 0

a1r1e1, a2r2e2, a4r3e4

8 torpedoes: ATT 4, MOV 3, RNG 6

2 torpedo bays, DEF 3

6 Laser Platforms:

E 1, Hull 2, Def 2, MOV 0

a1r1e1

6 Wazza Fighters

Attacker: 1 Battleship, 1 Destroyer, 1 Gunboat

Setup: Defender's Base is placed on one edge of CounterSpace map, Laser Platforms are placed anywhere within 3 hexes of the Base and the Wazza Fighters placed anywhere within 5 hexes of the Base.

The Attacker enters from the edge opposite the base.

The attacker's goal is to destroy the base and get as many ships as possible back off of the board, via the same side they entered on.

Attacker victory Conditions:

- Base destroyed and two or more attackers escape: Way To Go, Pal victory.
- Base destroyed and all attackers destroyed: Damned Shame it Had to End That Way victory.
- Base not destroyed: Miserable failure.

#### **9.4.0 Cargo Babysitters**

Defender: 3 cargo ships: Shields 0, MOV 2, Hull 3, No attack

6 Wazza Fighters

Attackers: 3 Gunships

Setup: Defender cargo ships start play in a line along the bottom edge of the map. Marketing deadlines enforce that the cargo ships move a minimum of one hex towards their destination every turn. The Wazza Fighters start play anywhere within 3 hexes of a cargo unit.

The Attacker starts play on the top edge of the map.

Randomly determine who goes first.

Goal: The Defender must get as many cargo ships as possible off the other side of the board while the Attacker tries to destroy as many cargo ships as possible, then retreat back off of the top edge.

Attacker victory Levels:

- All cargo ships destroyed and at least two gunships escape: Big Fat Victory.
- All cargo ships destroyed: Victory.
- Two cargo ships destroyed, at least one gunship gets away: Minor Victory
- Anything else is defeat.