FS3 Combat Code Tutorial
Version: FS3.1

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Welcome to FS3 Combat Code Tutorial

The mechanics of the FS3 system are explained fully in the FS3 Player's Guide and Storyteller's Guide.   However, the beauty of the FS3 softcode system (available for PennMUSH) is that it takes care of most of those details for you. This guide explains how to run and participate in combats using the coded commands.

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How does combat work?

Combat is organized into **turns**. Each turn, everyone involved gets to pose and act (more on this in a moment). The general flow of combat is:

1. Everyone poses *the results of what happened last turn* and *what they are going to do this turn*, and enters their actions into the system.
2. When everyone has posed and selected their action, the organizer triggers a new turn.
3. The system spits out a summary of what happened.
4. Rinse and repeat until the combat is over.

The system will roll all the dice necessary to figure out what happened, who hit whom, how much damage was done, whether a person was knocked out of the fight, etc. All you have to do is pose (don't forget this!) and tell the system what you're doing.

Starting a Combat

Starting a new combat involves several steps. The person who starts the combat is referred to as the **organizer**, and has special commands available to them. See Organizer Commands, page 10.

1. The organizer uses *+combat/start* to start the combat. This gives you the combat number, a unique ID for that combat.
2. Join PCs and NPCs to the combat. See Joining Combat, page 3.
3. Trigger the first turn using *+combat/newturn*.

Combat can be designated as 'mock' or 'real'. Mock combat represents training, sparring, paintball wars, etc. Damage from a mock combat is erased as soon as the combat is over.

Note: There is also a "Sparring" melee weapon. This represents someone wearing boxing gloves or hitting lightly, and is separate from the mock option. Hits from the sparring weapon do less damage than regular melee attacks.

```
+combat/start <mock or real> - Starts a combat.

+combat/stop <combat #> - Stops a combat.

+combat/all - Shows all combats going on.

+combat/newturn - Starts the first turn.
```

Joining Combat

The combat system allows multiple combats to be running simultaneously. Each combat is given a unique identifier, called the **combat number**, which is assigned when the organizer starts a combat. You use that number to join a combat. You may only be a part of one combat at a time.

The combat system supports PCs, NPCs, and vehicles. PCs and NPCs have access to all the same commands. Anywhere you can put in a PC name as a target, you can put in a NPC name too. The only difference is that a player controls his own PCs actions, whereas the organizer or another player controls a NPC.

When you join a combat, you must pick your type:

- **Soldier** - is a ground trooper on foot.
- **Pilot** - is someone piloting or driving a vehicle.
- **Passenger** - is anyone inside a vehicle who is not the pilot.
- **Observer** - is someone just watching the combat for kicks. An Observer may not be targeted, and may take no action other than controlling NPCs.

Vehicles are special. You don't add them to combat directly; they get added when someone specifies that they are a pilot or passenger in a vehicle. To shoot a vehicle, you target its pilot. The system does not support taking shots at people inside vehicles; you can only hit the vehicle itself.

```
+combat/all - Shows all combats going on

+combat/join <combat #>/<type>[/<vehicle>] - Joins combat
+combat/type <type>[/<vehicle>] - Changes combat type
   Type must be one of: soldier, pilot, passenger observer or npcmaster
   Vehicle is required for passenger/pilot.

+combat/leave - Leaves combat.
```

Combat HUD

The **Combat HUD** shows the general status of combat at a glance, and can be viewed using *+combat*.

```
<-------------------------------------------------------------------------------
< Name           Weapon/Vehicle      Damage  Stance/Action   Target
<
< Team 1
< Jane           Rifle (20)          .....   NOR/attack      Testdummy
< Testdummy      Rifle (393)         X....   NOR/attack      Bob Smith
<
< Team 2
< Bob Smith      Viper-9387g (plt)   XXXX.   NOR/pass
< J T            Viper-6938c (plt)   X....   NOR/attack      Testdummy
<
< Observers/NPCMasters:
< Faraday
<-------------------------------------------------------------------------------
```

The Combat HUD shows who's involved in the combat, what teams they're on (teams are just a way of grouping characters for easy reference), and other important information.

Weapon/Vehicle
For soldiers, this shows their weapon and ammo. For example: Rifle (20)
For vehicle crew, their vehicle and position (pilot or passenger). For example: Viper-9387 (plt). It doesn't show their weapon since normally they'll be using the vehicle's default weapon anyway.

Damage
Each X on the damage display represents a damage modifier of about 20%. It is quite possible for you to be at 2 X's, take another small wound, and still be at 2 X's. See Damage, page 5 for details on the damage system.

Stance/Action/Target
This shows their stance, planned action and target of said action. Yes, you can attempt to "game" the system by waiting to see what your opponent does, but they can do the same to you! If you both try this tactic, the combat will drag on forever and the organizer will smack you both. Be fair and sensible when picking actions; your character is not psychic.

In addition to the Combat HUD, you can also view details of anyone's individual combat status. This will show you things that aren't listed on the HUD, like armor, special modifiers, etc. You won't normally need this information but it's there if you want it.

```
+combat - Views a summary of your current combat status.

+combat <name> - Views someone's detailed combat status.
```

Damage

There are no 'hit points' in FS3. Instead each wound is tracked separately, and you are given an overall **damage modifier** (a percentage) based on the accumulated damage you've taken. The more seriously hurt you are (or your vehicle is), the less combat effective you will become, until eventually you won't be capable of doing anything but flailing around aimlessly. More details on the damage system can be found in the Player's Guide.

Players are expected to RP appropriate to the injuries they have taken. The combat system will inflict modifiers based on wounds.

```
+damage - Views your damage.

+damage <name> - Views someone else's damage, PC, NPC or Vehicle

+damage/notes <name>/<#>=<notes> - Adds notes to a wound.  This is
appended to any old notes.

For all damage commands, "name" may always be a PC, NPC or Vehicle
```

Knockout

The combat code will never kill you; that will happen at the Storyteller's discretion (or your own, if you really want to die.) The worst that will happen is you'll be knocked out, or **KO'd**. Once you're KO'd, you can no longer use any combat commands. NPCs are automatically removed from combat when KO'd. PCs stay in the fight but can't act or be targeted.

PCs can spend a luck point to undo a KO.   The 'rally' command can also undo a KO. This can reflect anything from slapping a lightly-wounded soldier on the face and yelling at him to 'snap out of it' to giving a big morale boosting speech to encourage a badly wounded comrade to keep fighting.   Both of these commands only undo the knockout; they don't reduce your damage any. Thus they work best when you're only moderately wounded.

Using first aid or jury-rigging a vehicle is also a very effective way to aid your teammates. Treated wounds have less of a wound modifier, making it less likely for them to be knocked out, and can even revive a KO'd player.

```
+combat/hero - Spends a luck point to undo a KO.

+combat/treat <name> - Apply first aid or jury-rigging.

+combat/rally <name> - Rally a KO'd character.
```

Gear

Gear includes weapons, armor and types of vehicles. The +gear command lets you view statistics for the various types of gear.

```
+gear/weapons - Lists weapon stats

+gear/armor - Lists armor stats

+gear/vehicles - Lists vehicle stats
```

When you join combat as a soldier, your weapon is automatically set to the default rifle weapon. You can change it at any time. You can also set your armor if appropriate.

```
+combat/weapon <weapon> - Sets weapon.

+combat/armor <armor> - Sets armor.
```

When you join combat as a pilot or passenger, the system automatically assigns you that vehicle's default weapon. You can change this to another weapon if your vehicle has multiple weapons available.   People in a vehicle can also select a personal weapon if they're firing out of a vehicle.

Vehicle armor is automatically factored in when a vehicle is targeted; you don't have to do anything special. If your character is wearing personal armor, use the armor command to set that up.

Free Actions

Certain actions are 'free', meaning that you can do any number of them per turn. Some free actions, like speaking and moving, have no specific command associated with them. They are simply handled via your character's pose.

Changing gear may or may not be considered a free action depending on the circumstances. For example, tossing aside your helmet, drawing a knife, or jumping into the bed of an open truck would generally be considered a free action. Donning a full suit of battle armor would definitely not.

Changing stance is also a free action. Stance reflects your position and general attitude toward combat – aggressive or defensive. More details on stances can be found in the Player's Guide.

```
+combat/stance <stance> - Sets stance
(banzai,normal,evade,cautious,cover,outofsight)
```

Regular Actions

In addition to the free actions, characters may take one regular action each turn. The actions are described in detail in the Player's Guide. A brief summary of the actions and their associated commands is given below.

Attack
The basic attack command shoots at a single target with your currently equipped weapon. Special options to the basic attack command allow you to execute a short (3-round) burst, specify the range, or target a particular hit location.

Fully automatic fire (10-round burst) uses a special command, as do explosive weapons. For explosive weapons, you must specify targets in two groups: those within the blast radius, and those up to twice the blast radius away.

Lastly, you can perform suppressive fire to keep a target's head down. Fully automatic weapons can suppress multiple targets at once.

```
+combat/attack <target>[/<specials, see below>]

Specials are optional, and can include:

* burst - Fire a short (3-round) burst.
* range=<range in meters> - If not specified, system assumes range is
point-blank.
* called=<location> - Perform a called shot to a particular hit
location.

Use +combat/hitlocs <target> to see a list of valid hit locations.

Use commas to separate multiple options.

+combat/fullauto <list of one or more targets, separated by commas> -
Fire a fully automatic (10-round) burst.
You can list up to 5 separate targets.

+combat/explode <targets right next to explosion, separated by
commas>/<near targets, separated by commas> - Uses an explosive weapon.

+combat/suppress <target, or comma-separated list of targets for a
fullauto weapon> - Use suppressive fire
```

Other Weapon Commands
You can spend a turn aiming at a target to get a bonus to hit that same target next turn. You can always reload a weapon that has run out of ammo.

```
+combat/aim <target> - Takes careful aim.

+combat/reload - Reloads a weapon.
```

Subdue and Escape
Subdue is a melee attack that does no damage but has a chance of subduing the target. Subdued targets may not act until they 'escape' or the attacker stops subduing them.

```
+combat/subdue <target> - Subdues a target.

+combat/escape - Attempts to escape while subdued.
```

Pass
If you are not taking any action this turn, use the pass command. It is important to do this so everyone knows you're not doing anything and doesn't wait for you.

```
+combat/pass - Takes no action this turn.
```

Luck

Each turn, you may spend a luck point to get a bonus to ONE of the following:
- Attack
- Defense
- Initiative

These bonuses last only a turn, so don't waste them.

You can also spend luck to recover from a knockout or move damage from one hit location to another immediately after an injury. Note that recovering from a knockout doesn't actually reduce your damage modifier, so it works best when you were KO'd after being only moderately wounded.

```
+combat/luck <attack, defense or initiative> - Spend a luck point this
turn.

+combat/hero - Stay in the fight after a KO.

+damage/move <#>=<location> - Spends a luck point to move the hit
location of a wound to yourself.
```

Healing

Wounds heal automatically over time. Doctors can speed the healing process using their medical skill, and wounds heal faster when you're in a designated hospital room. Vehicles may be 'treated' (repaired) as well.

The heal command marks yourself as caring for a person/vehicle until they are fully healed.

```
+heal <name> - Designates a patient.  Continues until they're fully
healed.

+healing – Shows who you're healing.

+stopheal <name> - Stops healing someone.
```

Vehicles

FS3 does not use vehicle objects, but rather has a database of "virtual" vehicles. When you join combat, you can either specify a pre-existing vehicle from the database or you can specify a *type* of vehicle and the system will generate a temporary one for you. That temporary vehicle will be deleted as soon as combat's over.

Note: When you target a vehicle, always target the pilot. Passengers can't be targeted directly. Because of this, passengers cannot choose a stance; only the pilot can.

```
+vehicles – Views all vehicles

+vehicle <name> - Views a specific vehicle.

+vehicle/create <name>=<type> - Creates a vehicle

+vehicle/delete <name> - Removes a vehicle

+vehicle/notes <name> - Adds notes to a vehicle.
```

NPCs

FS3 does not use objects for NPCs, but rather has a database of "virtual" NPCs. When you want to use a NPC in combat, you can either specify a pre-existing NPC from the database, or specify a temporary NPC name (like "Henchman27") and the system will generate a temporary one for you. That temporary NPC will be deleted as soon as combat's over.

```
+npcs – Shows NPCs

+npc <name> - Shows a specific NPC

+npc/create <name>=<skill> - Creates a NPC

+npc/delete <name> - Deletes a NPC.  Only the creator or staff can do
this.

+npc/skill <name>=<skill> - Changes a NPC's skill

+npc/notes <name>=<notes> - Adds notes to a NPC
```

Controlling NPCs

Someone must be responsible for posing for the NPC and entering their actions into the combat system. Normally this will be either the organizer or someone whose PC is not involved but wanted to get in on the fun by running a NPC. This player would join the combat as a **NPCMaster**.

Note: You do not have to be a NPCMaster to control NPCs in combat. Anyone involved in the combat can use the NPC commands. The benefits of being a NPCMaster are that a) you won't be accidentally targeted and b) you will be tracked by the pose tracking feature so that the organizer doesn't miss your pose.

NPCs and PCs are treated fundamentally the same in combat. You target a NPC just by using his name, and there are versions of every combat command that allow you to specify a NPC as the actor. Only one exception: KO'd NPCs are immediately removed from the combat. They cannot be treated, rallied, or revived with a hero roll.

```
+combat/join <name>=<combat#>/<type>[/<vehicle>] - Joins someone else
to combat

If the name specified does not already exist as a PC or in the NPC
database, a temporary NPC will be added with a random skill level.


Other combat commands have versions for NPCs with the NPC's name in
front of them.  For example:

+combat/weapon <npcname>=<weapon>

+combat/attack <npcname>=<target>
```

NPC Skills

Unlike PCs, NPCs have only a single skill level that is used for all their rolls. This is set when the NPC is created, and can be changed by the owner of the NPC (the person who created him) or a staff member at any time.

Damage and NPCs

The combat system remembers damage done to NPCs, just like PCs. This is good for permanent NPCs, because they will get hurt and heal up the same as the PCs. Temporary NPCs go away when the combat's over.

Organizer Commands

As a combat organizer, whether you're a Storyteller or just a player running a combat, there are certain additional commands and considerations.

Pose and Action Tracking

As the organizer, the combat system will notify you when everyone has posed and entered their actions into the system. If time is passing and you still haven't seen those messages, you can check the 'slackers' command to see who's snoozing. You can then choose to poke them, enter an action on their behalf, or simply skip over them.

```
+combat/slackers - See at a glance who hasn't posed or chosen their
actions.
```

Teams

Teams are a convenient way of organizing combatants into smaller groups when they split up. PCs are automatically assigned to Team 1 and NPCs to Team 2. You can change someone's team at any time.

```
+combat/team <name>=<team#> - Switches teams.
```

Targets

PCs pick their targets when they aim or attack. NPCs do so automatically. By default, NPCs on Team 1 will aim at Team 2, Team 2 will aim at Team 1, and NPCs on other teams will aim at anyone not on their team.

You can change this by targeting teams against specific other teams. They will only pick targets from the teams you specify. You can also list specific individuals as targets. For example, you can specify that teams 1 and 3 will target teams 2 and 4, but that Bob will specifically target Mary.

Please note! These commands apply to ALL NPCs. If you have other players running NPCs in your combat, be sure to let them know that this will redirect their NPCs' targets, and they'll have to fix it.

NPCs automatically pick an appropriate action and a target when the retarget command is triggered. They will keep their target until it's taken out or until someone does a retarget. However, you can manually force them to pick a new action or a specific target using one of the NPC combat commands.

```
+combat/target <name>=<target> - Forces someone to change targets

+combat/teamtarget <team# list>=<team# list> - Sets up team targets

Example:  +combat/target 1 3 = 2 4  (targets teams 1 and 3 at teams 2
and 4) Note that this does not affect targets for teams 2 and 4 - you
must set them separately.  This team setting is remembered from one
turn to the next.

+combat/retarget - Forces all NPCs to pick new random targets based on
their team targets.

+combat/retarget <attacker=target,attacker=target,etc.> -
NPCs on the list will pick specific targets and everyone else will pick
random targets

+combat/randtarget <name>[/<num targets>] - Spits out a # of random
targets for 'name'.
```

Modifiers

Organizers may apply situational modifiers to characters based on things like darkness, rain, or what-have-you. A modifier is just like a skill roll modifier - a +/- percentage. Do not use this for damage modifiers; they are factored in automatically.

```
+combat/mod <name>=<modifier, + or -> - Sets a situational modifier
(not for damage!).
```

Damage

There are several staff-only commands used to modify and inflict damage, to make adjustments for the inevitable cases where someone attacks someone they shouldn't have, or the combat system gets wonky. These are not available to general organizers; only staff.

All damage commands may be used on a PC, NPC or Vehicle.

```
+damage/mod <name>/<#>=<stat>/<level> - Modifies details of an injury.
See +damage/mod for the possible stat values.

+damage/delete <name>/<#> - Deletes an injury

+damage/inflict <name>=<mock or real>/<hit location>/<weapon>/<physical
or stun>/<severity> - Inflicts damage. May be used outside of combst.

+damage/clear <name> - Clears all damage (even healed damage) from the
database.

+combat/unko - Un-KO's someone who shouldn't have been (organizer only)
```

Booby Traps and Unmanned Vehicles

It is possible that someday you may have a situation where there is an "unmanned" attacker or defender, be it a booby trapped grenade or an empty vehicle. The combat system doesn't handle these situations, so you have two choices:

1) Just RP it. Have folks make some appropriate +rolls and be done with it. You can even manually inflict the damage using +damage/inflict if it's important that it be in the combat system.
2) Put in a dummy attacker or defender. If it's an unmanned vehicle target, just make a NPC pilot with a skill of 0 (thus making him so crappy he will never dodge). If it's an unmanned attacker like a mine, just make a NPC attacker with a skill appropriate to how well the mine was placed.

As always, remember that the combat system is a tool to aid RP, and will never be able to account for all possible situations.

Robots and AIs

A note about robots: Humanoid cyborgs/robots (Borg, Terminators, Cylon Centurions, etc.) should be treated as soldiers, with armor that covers their bodies.

Vehicular robots (Cylon Raiders, Skynet HKs, etc.) should be treated like vehicles. You'll need to make a NPC to represent their AI and act as their "pilot".

Balancing Combats

Lopsided combats are generally not much fun for either side, and sometimes may be downright detrimental to the theme/plot. As an organizer, it is important for you to balance the skills of PCs and NPCs to ensure a reasonably fair fight. You should also check to make sure everyone has the proper gear and stance setup.
You can use the NPC command to adjust NPC skill levels.

Another way to balance combat is to simply apply a modifier. Badguys kicking your players' butts and you don't want them to? Give a few of them a -40 modifier and watch the tables turn.

You can also give someone a lethality modifier, which applies to weapon damage. This is also a percentage, just like the weapon's lethality rating. So if you really want to kill someone, set their opponent to have a huge to-hit modifier and lethality modifier :)

Is this cheating? Yes and no. I would never advocate its use to maliciously pick on a PC. But just as a gamemaster in a tabletop game sometimes rolls behind a screen and ignores the results to further the plot, MUSH Storytellers should be allowed the same flexibility. These commands let you "stack the deck" for dramatic effect. It is up to you to use them responsibly.

```
+combat/skills - Views a summary of combatant skills

+combat/gear - Views a summary of combatant gear

+combat/mod <name>=<modifier, + or -> - Sets a special modifier.

+combat/lethal <name>=<modifier, + or -> - Sets a lethality modifier
```

Bugs and Logs

Each combat maintains a log of what happened, along with debugging info. If you suspect a bug, you can email the appropriate section to Faraday. Just remember to do this before stopping combat, because otherwise it will be lost.

```
+combat/log - Views debugging log
```