

Alpha Strike: House Rules to Improve Variable Damage

Variable Damage 2.0

The current system for this is pretty weak. I was inspired by [DFA's thread](#) and their blog for rolling [weapons hits and damage locations](#). Their method significantly lowers the amount of time looking at tables and rolling for weapon and location hits. Essentially, 1d6 (yellow die) is a pilot die, every 1d6 after (different colored/size die) represents a weapon system, and another 1d6 die is an effect die to determine minimal damage and tough armor critical. The pilot die applies to all weapon die after the roll. This is just one roll of a pool of die.

For Alpha Strike, using this method for Variable Damage, it would work like this:

To hit 7, unit causes 3 damage:				To hit 7, unit causes 0* damage:			
Pilot Die		Dmg. Die	Total	Pilot Die		Dmg. Die	Total
3	+	5	= 8 Hit	3	+	5	= 8 Hit
		2	= 5 Miss				
Effect Die		4	= 7 Hit	Effect Die			
4				4	=	Damage caused on 3+	
Unit causes 2 damage to target No tough armor critical hit				Unit causes 1 damage to target			

Let's say the to-hit was 7 and the unit causes 3 damage.

- 1 - Roll yellow pilot die 1d6 results in a 3.
- 2 - Roll white 1d6 per damage, results 5, 2, and 4.
- 3 - Roll red effect die 1d6 results in a 4
- 4 - The unit combines damage die results with the pilot die. This would be 8,5,7. The unit causes a total of 2 damage. In this case, since this is not minimal damage, the effect die indicates a tough armor critical. This is when both the pilot die and the effect die is equal to 6. In this example, a critical hit is not applied. If both of these die did result in 6, you would roll for a critical hit on the unit using their respective critical hit table.

- 5 - For 0*, you would just roll 2d6 for the to-hit roll, then roll 1d6 to determine if damage is caused (3+ causes damage). 1 yellow, 1 white damage die, and 1 effect die which determines if the damage is minimal. Minimal damage does not cause a tough armor critical hit.

It looks complicated, but when you roll some dice, you will see it that it is a lot faster using a dice pool like this when there are a lot of units on the board. It's seemingly better than rolling 2d6 to see if you hit and then rolling #d6 and sorting out the ones that hit. Or better than rolling a pool of d12 or 2d6 per point of damage (other house rules others have used). You no longer need to have the "1 damage minimum" rule as well. This also introduces tough armor criticals into the game, something that was not translated from conversion.

With what I propose hits are more in line with the odds of rolling 2d6/bell curve. The lower the to-hit, the more damage you are likely to do, just like in Total Warfare. It also speeds up Variable Damage because hits are more concentrated depending on your pilot die result. If you have a high pilot die you increase your odds of scoring damage. Likewise, if your pilot die is low, you have a lower chance of damage. If you read DFA's blog, it explains how the odds work for Total Warfare... some of that translates here and I feel it works better for Alpha Strike because it retains the focus on speed. The current system for variable damage does this poorly. It requires an extra dice roll and you can score a hit on a low target number and whiff all of your damage by rolling under a 4 on all of your d6 (basically, the odds of flipping a coin). The damage results are independent of the bell curve so you get some strange results.

Also, I would propose that when Variable Damage is in play, it applies to all damage except for Charge and DFA attacks. Currently physical attacks are not lumped in with this. This would also mean you would roll a damage die for damage bonuses (like for rear and melee attacks). Variable Damage attacks are still considered one hit.

Expanding Terrain with Variable Damage 2.0

Using the rules above, I was also thinking of a way to make terrain a little more intricate... Mind you, I do hex based play, so features like Light Woods and different depths of water show up. This idea is a play on the glancing blow rule found in Tactical Operations. Terrain modifiers would now look like this (matching modifiers from A Time of War):

Light Woods	+1
Heavy Woods	+2
Depth 1 Water	See Partial Cover
Partial Cover	+1

When a unit has Partial Cover or occupies Wooded terrain, ranged attacks against this unit may cause a "glancing blow." When rolling to-hit, if the 2d6 result is equal to the target number, it is considered a miss. To be fair, there is a maximum amount of damage that will miss. The total amount of damage that can miss is the total damage value divided by 2 (round normally for water, round down for woods). This means a unit that causes 1 damage can score a glancing blow and not cause any damage unless it is a woods hex. A unit that causes 3 damage can only glance with 2. For Example: A unit that causes 3 damage is firing on a unit with partial cover with a TN of 7. Each result is 7,7,8, which indicates 2 glancing blows. The unit causes 1 total damage. It's not much of a reduction, but it creates a benefit to utilize terrain outside of stacking modifiers. It also tips the advantage to the unit firing from woods with some extra coverage since the Attacker suffers the same modifier as the Defender.

Water is the only thing that gets unbalanced because it lowers heat and provides partial cover. Movement in water should lower TMM. I was thinking for this, the unit reduces its TMM by 1/2 rounded normally when occupying the hex. This would also be coupled with the "glancing blow" rule. This reduction is almost in line with how movement works in Total Warfare, but acknowledges how fast units die in Alpha Strike. It also keeps fast movers out of water unless they absolutely need to do so. Heavier or slower designs can take advantage of water giving them an edge against lighter and faster units (specifically those with TMM 1).

Overall, it may be a little complicated, but I don't think it's much of a slowdown.

Movement with Variable Damage 2.0

This makes targeting more in line with A Game of Armored Combat. When you move you suffer modifiers. Just as an example, I feel the game revolves around units that have a TMM of 1 and skill 4 at the introductory level. In open terrain, you would have a baseline of 8 at medium range. This makes targeting a bit harder which theoretically increases the time it takes to play the game and also makes units a little less fragile:

Stand Still	+0
Move	+1
Jumped	+3

I feel like this coupled with the other rules in this thread would make things way more interesting and account for some of the Terrain modifier reductions.

Expanded Vehicle Critical Hits

In Total Warfare, Vehicles suffer critical hits (not talking about motive hits, here) more often than 'Mechs. A lot more often, in fact. 2 or 12 on the front and rear tables results in a critical. The side arcs have them at 2, 12, and 9, where they are more vulnerable. Doing it like this is pretty close to the odds of scoring a critical across all 4 vehicle charts (1/12 chance). This does not translate into the rules for Alpha Strike... IMO, this really should, and I think this is a way to do it by adding something to the motive system damage chart:

2-8 No Effect**

** A result of 2 or 3 results in a critical hit (do not apply vehicle type modifiers)

So when you roll to check for motive hits, any time you roll a 2 or 3, you then roll on the critical hit table and hope for the best. This is more in line with how Vehicles work in Total Warfare and gives them a slight de-buff against 'Mechs. There are no extra rolls either since critical hits are tied into the motive hit table. Also, vehicles already get some discounts in conversion, so I don't think any changes to PV would need to happen.