

FEDERATION
COMMANDER

& *STAR FLEET BATTLES*

CAPTAIN'S LOG #46

WARNING:
VARIABLE
GRAVITY
AREA

CN-334

ADAM TURNER
2013



**FOR DUTY,
ALL THINGS**



New Horizons...

This issue may, someday, be looked at as the last of the previous way of doing things. By the time of our next issue, our permanent in-house staff will grow, our product schedule will be back on track, and we'll be standing on the edge of a cliff ready to take a great step forward... err... wait a minute...

We'll be standing on the peak of a great mountain, ready to launch the company to soar with the eagles among the clouds.

Yeah, *that's* better.

Rarely do we finish an issue with such a sense of excitement about the next few months as we have this issue. The year 2013 will see a stronger and bigger ADB, Inc., heading in new directions, while never forgetting the friends who have been with us so long. You're going to enjoy this ride. Come with us.

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STAR FLEET HISTORY

FOR DUTY, ALL THINGS

by Joe Gallagher

**USS Potemkin – 3rd Division, 6th Fleet
Romulan Border 5 August 2573; Eagle + 3 Days**

Seated at the head of the table in the briefing room, Fleet Captain Sergei Yefimov drained the last of his tepid coffee and struggled to remain focused through a haze of stress and fatigue. Although his first officer, conducting the briefing, projected as insuperable an image as ever to the crew, he could see the toll of the past couple of days in the bloodshot corners of her eyes and the paleness of her normally cerulean skin. Yefimov made a mental note to order her to take some downtime after the morning battle update concluded and concentrated on the status updates from the ships in his division.

"Captain Chen reports that the *Zhadanovis* still on course to her rally point," Trelar continued, "and still unable to shake the Romulans in pursuit. They were forced to fight another delaying action last night, and were again successful in disengaging without major damage. Even allowing for the slower ships she's escorting, *Zhadanov* will arrive at our rendezvous about three days before we do, assuming we maintain current course and speed. *Kashmir* reports no enemy contact since their last encounter and has already arrived at their rally point. They have been on station there for eight hours. Captain Svenson says there's still no sign of *Mallory*."

"And still no signals from *Mallory* since the day of the initial attack? No relays from Orions or bases?" Yefimov asked.

"No, Sir. Nothing," Trelar said.

The sinking feeling in Yefimov's gut deepened. One of two frigates in the Third Division, *Mallory's* orders had been to fall back and link up with the light cruiser *Kashmir*. Since *Mallory* had been much closer to the rally point at the time of the initial Romulan attacks, she should have made it to the rally point almost a day before *Kashmir*.

"Play back their last transmission," Yefimov ordered.

Trelar input a command on her console and the main viewscreen crackled to life, the placid atmosphere of the briefing room suddenly shattered by the sounds of *Mallory's* commanding officer shouting to be heard above the din of the battle roaring around the small frigate.

"...I repeat: this is Commander Sanchez of the *USS Mallory*. We are under attack by two BattleHawk-class Romulan ships and are falling back under heavy fire..."

**USS Mallory
Romulan Border 2 August 2573; Day of the Eagle**

"...falling back under heavy fire," Sanchez was saying, as the turbolift doors opened onto *Mallory's* crimson-lit bridge. "We have sustained light damage, but are still warp-capable and falling back to rally point delta-four. Requesting assistance from any vessel within range..." He was cut off in mid-sentence as another barrage of phaser fire slammed into *Mallory's* shields, shaking the deck hard, so hard he almost pitched forward out of his chair, and sending the turbolift's occupant sprawling forward onto the deck.

Junior Communications Officer Sevrin quickly picked him-

self up and headed over to the communications station. Lieutenant Pell, the senior communications officer, was just completing the transmission of the captain's distress call. He scowled distastefully as he saw Sevrin approach.

"Sevrin," Pell said, "What the hell are you doing here; you're supposed to be in auxiliary control!"

"I am responding to your request for assistance with repairs," Sevrin said, indicating the electronics kit he had carried with him to the bridge. "All damage control teams are occupied elsewhere and the first officer felt I was best qualified to..."

"Fine, fine," Pell interrupted, "An engineer is what I need but you'll have to do. Listen: the main communications array has just about had it; I barely got that last message out."

"We should switch to the secondary transmitter," Sevrin said.

"Thank you, Mr. Sevrin, I did think of that," Pell said impatiently, "Only I can't get the system to fail over to the secondary. The primary isn't working, but the computer thinks it is and won't let go. The backup array is on line; I just can't get the damn computer to recognize that. See what you can do with it."

The deck heaved under them as the ship banked abruptly to starboard. Sevrin gripped the console, barely keeping his feet as *Mallory* swung away from her assailants. Trying to ignore the chaos going on around them, Sevrin started running through diagnostic routines on one of the overhead displays, confident he could resolve the problem. In point of fact, Lieutenant Pell should have been pleased to see him. Sevrin held an A5 computer expert classification, two levels higher than anyone else in communications including Pell himself. Although he tried to remain focused on the task at hand, Sevrin was disappointed in himself for not having already confronted his superior about his unprofessional attitude. Now, his delay in resolving the matter was adversely affecting the mission.

The ship rocked again as another salvo slammed into the aft shield. Sevrin stole a glance at the main viewscreen and was relieved to see both attackers astern as *Mallory* maneuvered onto an escape course.

"Engineering," Sanchez ordered, "Dump the photons and divert all available power to propulsion. Helm, set course for the rally point and prepare to boost to maximum warp. Get us out of here!"

Sevrin completed the last of his diagnostics and verified the results. "The fault is not in the computer, Sir. All routines are functioning within nominal parameters. A physical problem is preventing system failover, probably the result of battle damage."

"There's no way both arrays could have been knocked out," Pell said, "They didn't hit us that hard. It must be a connectivity issue. Start running through the conduits one by one and I'll check the relays." Pell dropped to his knees, yanked the cover off the access panel under the communications console, and started inspecting connections.

Privately, Sevrin considered Pell's reasoning to be seriously flawed. The chances of both arrays being damaged seemed to him to have more to do with accuracy or luck on the part of the Romulan gunners rather than the total amount of damage sustained. But there seemed little point in debating the issue while still in combat, and both possibilities would need to be checked eventually anyway.

"New contacts!" the sensor officer shouted. "Two vessels, bearing zero-mark-four, directly in our path. Hostile 3 is reading as a frigate, Hostile 4 as a cruiser. They're on an intercept course

and closing fast!"

"Dammit, they must have flanked us under cloak while we were busy with the other two!" Sanchez said. "Helm, secure from high-warp preparations. Come about to two-nine-zero. Hopefully that cruiser is one of the older Eagles that we can outmaneuver."

Sevrin continued trying to diagnose the problems with the communications arrays. Although he did not approve of Pell's methodology, he was beginning to arrive at the same conclusion. All of the first six connections he tested showed green on the console but failed as soon as he tried to put actual load on them, and he reported as much.

"Are you positive it's not the damn computer?" Pell replied, the upper half of his torso still buried in the guts of the console. "Because I don't see anything that... oh, crap, wait a minute. I see it now: it's the junction box all the way in the back by the EMI interface. I can see the scorch marks from here. We'll have to pull the whole console to get at it!"

Pell was right; there were too many live components in the way for him to make repairs without electrocuting himself — not while the console was active. But Sevrin remembered having assisted the chief engineer with a similar problem on the weapons station a few months ago. "I can access that box from the other side," he said to Pell, who was still extricating himself from the access panel. "If I cut carefully through the wall of the head, I should be able to get at the relays without taking the console offline."

Pell considered this for a second and nodded assent. "Good idea. Go do it and be quick about it!"

Sevrin hurried through the portside access hatch into the service corridor that circumscribed the main bridge. Passing through the restroom into the emergency supply storage beyond, he grabbed a hand phaser from the weapons locker and ran back into the head. If his estimates were correct, the damaged junction box was right on the other side of the far wall. He dialed down the power on the phaser and narrowed the focus emitter. While was lining up his target, his communicator started beeping urgently. Flipping it open, he heard Pell's voice, sounding panicked now.

"Sevrin! Hurry the hell up, I just got an order to launch a log buoy and I can't get the logs to dump their files into it. I need those relays online now!"

Sevrin stopped short. Emergency log buoys were triple-redundant systems; he had never heard of one going completely offline. "Sir, I suggest we abandon these repairs and tell auxiliary control to take over all communications systems. If the damage..."

"And just who in AuxCon do you think is going to take over since we're both up here?" Pell yelled angrily. "In the time it would take them to figure out the system I could replace that junction box twice. Now move!"

Before he could reply, Sevrin was thrown hard to the deck as it went out from under him. The frigate shook like it had just crashed into the side of a starbase. He could hear the bridge crew in the background through the open communicator.

"The King Eagle has us in a tractor beam!"

"Engineering: emergency power to negative tractor!" Sanchez ordered.

"No effect, Captain, the link's too strong."

"Torpedoes inbound from the Snipe!"

Sevrin hesitated. He had never disobeyed an order from a superior officer, but there could be only minutes left to complete the captain's last order. After a brief mental debate, he holstered the phaser and switched frequencies on the communicator.

"Auxiliary control," Sevrin said, "This is bridge communica..."

There was a deafening blast and Sevrin had just a moment's sensation of being completely airborne before his body hit something solid.

He tried to catch his breath as the world went dark.

Covert Operations Base *Aerie 7*

Federation Neutral Zone 3 August 2573; Eagle + 1 Day

Pente-Tribune Julian Artex ignored the young Praetorian standing at attention before him as he paged through the applicant's service record. By any standards, his record was impeccable: graduation with honors from the Academy, four commendations for bravery, and a deep background in engineering and ship's systems. He was the perfect replacement for the team's former technical specialist, who had been unexpectedly re-assigned shortly after their return to base. Artex needed to look no further than the man's ceremonial blade to know this was no coincidence. The *mainz gladius* the applicant proudly wore on his belt belied his noble birth and his affiliation with the powerful House Casifax. Artex despised politically motivated personnel transfers. The fact that the man was unquestionably well qualified for the slot on his team only made him angrier.

Artex went through every detail of the flawless record twice before snapping off the monitor and turning to regard the man standing across the desk from him. The young applicant continued to stare straight ahead unflinchingly until Julian finally spoke.

"Centurion Tev, do you know why I hold the rank of pente-tribune?" he asked.

If the unusual opening to the interview caught the applicant off-guard, he didn't show it. Tev hesitated only a moment before replying, "Your experience, years of service, and achievements have exceeded the expectations of a major-tribune and warranted your promotion."

Julian snorted. "That is a textbook and quite politically correct response, Centurion. What I am asking is if you know why I do not wear the rank of commander and never shall?"

"I do not, Sir," Tev replied.

"Well then, allow me to explain. I hold what you know full well to be a dead-end rank because I do not play politics well and I do not suffer gladly those who do. So, over the years I have primarily recruited Praetorians who are not affiliated with a Great House or are members of the Military House like myself and my executive officer over there," Artex said, gesturing towards the slender woman seated in the far corner. "Knowing this, why would



an obviously talented and ambitious young officer such as yourself waste his time applying for an appointment on a team led by a political exile?"

"May I speak candidly, Tribune?" Tev asked.

"Because you believe doing so would somehow *improve* your chances? By all means speak frankly, Centurion," Artex said, leaning back in his chair and gesturing magnanimously.

Tev turned to meet Julian's gaze squarely. "Tribune Artex, your reputation precedes you, but not only for your political bias. Your team ranks among the top 10 Praetorian teams in active service. You are consistently selected for the most challenging assignments and you have an almost perfect mission success rate. You've read my record; you know that throughout my career I have sought out tough assignments and served with distinction. I want a spot on your team because it is a place where I believe I can be of great service — to House Casifax, certainly, but to the Empire first and foremost."

"For the Empire first and foremost?" Julian said. "As long as we are being so candid with each other, Centurion, I must say that this has not always been my experience with well-heeled officers. If I were to take you on my team, I would almost certainly wish to test you on this. Not to mention that I would also be harder on you than any other new team member. You would need to prove to me that your glowing record is indeed based upon your skill and hard work and not your political connections. Knowing this you would still wish to serve under my command?"

"For duty, all things," Tev replied, returning to attention.

Artex glared silently at him a moment longer and finally said, "You're dismissed, Centurion. You will hear of my decision presently." He waited until the door closed before addressing his second in command. "He's clever, I'll give him that. A little bit of modernist philosophy to show he's willing to challenge me but be respectful at the same time. What did you think, Rav?"

"Top 10, my ass," Ravenna Lal said, walking over to claim one of the chairs in front of Artex's desk. "You couldn't find three teams with a better record than ours, especially since old Quintus got himself eaten by the lizards."

"I meant your impressions of the man, not his flattery."

Ravenna shrugged. "What do you want me to say, Jules? His skills are perfect for the open slot. His record is perfect; his hair is perfect; his teeth are perfect. I don't know where the big houses get these guys from; it's like they grow them in a vat somewhere. More to the point: why are you bothering to interview him if you don't like his pedigree? I'm sure you have time to make inquiries through the Military House for someone you'll find more agreeable than Mister Perfect."

"As it happens, I do not," Julian said, feeling his choler rising again. "I was just informed an hour ago that we have been given a priority one assignment in Federation space: something directly supporting the invasion. The briefing is in two hours and it will include some gentlemen from the Intelligence Directorate who just happen to be from House..."

"Casifax?"

"Close. Pentalion. Those two houses have been as thick as thieves as they keep trying to grab power from House Aurelius in the senate. So, I have the choice of letting them get their man a spot on my team or running a mission in enemy space without a tech specialist."

"Well, look at it this way, boss. As political appointments go, you could do a lot worse. His attitude doesn't seem too bad. If he's really as sharp as his record says, he might work out. If not..." she shrugged, "space is a dangerous place. The poor kid might have a terrible accident or something. Might serve as an example to future generations why engineers shouldn't wear pig-stickers on their uniforms."

Julian laughed despite himself. "Come on, let's get out of here. I need an hour in the gym to burn off some steam before that briefing."

Covert Operations Base *Aerie 7* Briefing Room, 90 minutes later

Artex was seated with Lal, Tev, and the other three members of his Praetorian team in the familiar confines of the outpost's small briefing room. Also present was Othus, a signals specialist who doubled as the team's briefing officer, and two officers from the State Security Administration. Neither of them wore any insignia to denote which specific directorate they worked for. After a few minutes of observation, Artex pegged the younger man as an intelligence analyst. The markings were all there: the methodical inspection of his briefing materials, the observant but incurious gaze with just a hint of nervousness at the unfamiliar surroundings, and the sallow skin of an officer who has spent an entire career in windowless buildings.

His companion, however, was something else entirely. His compact, well-muscled frame sat completely at ease; callused hands folded over an unopened briefing packet. Julian could see an energetic intelligence behind the close-set eyes, which cast a predatory appearance. This was an Operations man, probably senior level, and his presence made Artex even more apprehensive than he had been going in.

"This is your assignment," Othus continued, indicating the small Federation ship on the main display. "The Earther frigate *USS Mallory* was seized in battle approximately 14 hours ago by four ships from the 8th Star Legion."

Like many Romulans, the term "Earther" was a frequent replacement for "Federation" in everyday speech. While all knew the correct term, decades of Federation-Romulan conflicts had left most Romulans believing that the Earth dominated the multi-species Federation's policies and actions toward the Empire. The substitution was not so much an error as a mark of contempt. No Romulan would have thought of it as such, but the wording was the same as most Americans during the Cold War referring to the Soviets as "Russians" despite Russia being only a fraction of the USSR. Everybody knew the Russians ran the Soviet Union.

Artex skimmed the details of the battle in his briefing packet. "Four ships led by a King Eagle is a lot of firepower just to kill a frigate," he said. "What's so special about this ship?"

"Nothing, really," Othus replied. "The two command cruisers in this area of operations were each assigned a Federation cruiser to destroy. This cohort was expecting to find the light cruiser *Kashmir*, but the Federation apparently changed their deployment just before the attack."

"It's a shame to have so much wasted firepower because of bad intelligence," Artex said, glancing over towards the two SSA men, who ignored him.

"As it happens, the cohort was able to use its superior numbers to good advantage and captured the *Mallory* relatively intact. Beyond the usual benefits associated with capturing an enemy ship, this has created an invaluable opportunity to accelerate the progress of the invasion," Othus said. "Imperial Command has decided to employ the captured ship in an attack on a high payoff target in Federation space."

Othus adjusted the display to show a slice of Federation space well east of the Tholian border, with overlaid graphics marking the invasion corridor. He highlighted an objective considerably deeper than the current line of advance. "This is the location of the enemy's forward repair depot for this sector. As you know, the admiralty's strategy in the first wave of the invasion is to bypass fixed defenses under cloak and focus on the destruction of the enemy's mobile platforms. We already outnumber the enemy by a significant margin. With the destruction of the ships on the border and the tremendous strain of the ongoing war with the Klingons, the Federation Star Fleet will not have the resources for any meaningful counter-offensive, allowing us time to consolidate and gain a quick victory over our ancient foe."

"Success hinges upon a quick, decisive defeat of the enemy fleet. This is where you come in. Should any enemy ships in this

sector survive the first wave of attacks, they will likely fall back to this depot for repairs and resupply, believing it to be too deep in their interior to be a target so soon in the invasion. Your team will assume command of the captured enemy frigate and proceed to the repair depot as a friendly vessel in obvious need of repairs. With the element of surprise you will be in a position to attack not only the depot itself but, more importantly, the warships under repair. With any luck, you should be able to destroy or cripple the installation and any damaged ships present."

"With any luck..." Julian said, still wrapping his mind around the ambitiousness of the proposed plan. "This plan strikes me as based on some very thin assumptions. For a start: how can we be so sure of the location of the enemy repair depot and its defenses? No offense to our comrades in Intelligence, but this seems like quite an accomplishment considering that we are having difficulty differentiating frigates from light cruisers. Furthermore, even if the location is correct, how can we be so sure the enemy will be conveniently waiting for us there? Or that my team, even in a captured ship, will be able to penetrate that far into enemy space without detection? I'm sure even the Federation will notice when one of its ships stops calling in with the proper codes on a regular basis."

"The data on the repair depot was purchased at great expense via the Orion syndicate, and our intelligence analysts consider it to be accurate. However, you are quite right about the risks involved with so many variables. This mission requires expertise beyond even the autonomy and improvisation your team is famous for. Which is why an Intelligence Operations team led by Sub-Commander Tarus has also been assigned to this mission," Othus said, indicating the older SSA man. "He has... let us say 'special assets' at his command which will greatly improve your odds of success."

It was common practice to assign two teams to Praetorian operations, with one team acting as a backup in case the primary element failed. It was unorthodox for the backup team to be Intelligence instead of Praetorian, but it made little difference to Julian. "I'm sure the commander's team is first rate," he said, smiling politely at Tarus, "But your 'assets' are probably best applied elsewhere. My team has not called for backup once in the past three years. Furthermore, I hardly see how it would be possible..."

"Tribune Artex, you misunderstand," Othus interrupted. "Commander Tarus's team will be co-assigned to this mission, not a backup. Since the mission falls under the jurisdiction of the Praetorian Preditrate, you will be in overall command of the operation. However, the Intelligence personnel, particularly the special assets, will be under the direction of the sub-commander. You are expected to work together cooperatively without being distracted by inter-agency rivalries."

Not bloody likely, Julian thought, seething inside as Othus resumed speaking. Throughout the remainder of the briefing he continued to size up the Operations man. Tarus neither sought out nor flinched from his gaze, staring back at him with the same inscrutable expression. When the briefing finally adjourned, Tarus walked around the table to Artex and formally introduced himself. Shorter than Julian had first thought, Tarus had a grip that was firm without seeming compensatory.

"Tribune Artex, I know you are apprehensive about the arrangements for this mission," Tarus said. "I wouldn't be happy about having an unknown quantity forced upon me for a mission this complex and dangerous either. I need you to believe me when I tell you that my team has been selected for the same reason yours has: because we are very good at what we do. Also, as was said, I have resources at my disposal which will prove invaluable."

Julian silently regarded him before speaking. Like himself, Tarus had a lot of rank to be commanding a single team. But unlike him, this man had been promoted from major-tribune to

sub-commander, instead of the dead-end rank of pente-tribune. This was an officer whose career was still going somewhere. Artex wondered just how special these assets were to come with so senior an officer. "It might set my mind a bit more at ease," he finally replied, "If I knew exactly what these resources are."

"Of course. If you will accompany me," Tarus said, walking towards the door.

"One moment," Artex said, gesturing Ravenna over. "This is Centurion Lal, my second in command and weapons specialist. I want her to see this, too."

Expecting resistance, Artex was surprised when Tarus simply shrugged and said "It's a small ship Tribune; she'll see it all soon enough anyway. This way please."

Artex exchanged surprised glances with Lal before following the Intelligence man to a small office in the back of the station. Tarus saluted and gave the proper security response to the guard's challenge before leading them inside. "Tribune Artex, Centurion Lal, allow me to introduce the rest of my team," Tarus said, gesturing to the four perfectly average looking men and women seated around a table playing cards.

Four perfectly average looking humans.

Tarus paused for just a moment to enjoy the Praetorians' shocked expressions as his team dropped their cards and stood at attention. "This is Centurion Smith, Centurion Jones, Centurion Li, and Centurion Doe. As you were."

"Cosmetic surgery?" Lal asked. But Artex knew before Tarus shook his head that this was not the case. He had worked with agents surgically altered to appear human before and it was never this convincing. Vulcans were one thing, but no matter how good the doctors were it was impossible to give a true Romulan the soft, pinkish coloring the Earthmen had. These four were the real thing.

"Where do they come from?" Artex asked.

"Different places, different stories," Tarus replied. "Centurion Li was orphaned on a Romulan world when his parents' merchant vessel crashed there. Centurion Jones is the descendant of two Federation scientists who defected after the First Federation War. Centurion Doe comes to us via the Orion syndicate. But make no mistake: DNA aside, these men and women are Romulan to the core. They were each recruited by the SSA at a young age and have been extensively trained in Federation language and customs. Each of them has had some previous field experience, but this is the first time an opportunity has arisen that warrants deploying the entire team. They have, quite literally, been training their entire lives for this mission."

Artex let out a deep breath, and drew in another. He had just had what must be the most unique infiltration team in this corner of the galaxy placed under his command and he did not feel the slightest bit better for it.

USS Mallory

Romulan Border 4 August 2573; Eagle +2 Days

Pain seared down his face as Sevrin struggled to consciousness. Above him, the Vulcan sun shone mercilessly upon the Shi-Kahr desert. He was 16 years old, and he was lying alone in the desert on his Kahs-wan, the test of manhood. The last thing he remembered was the fight with the desert predator, slaying the beast but losing his footing, slipping into the crevasse and falling... How long had he been here? He lay there, drifting in and out of consciousness, awaiting death until the familiar form of his father appeared. "Get up, son," his father urged. "Finish what you have started." But Sevrin's muscles would not respond. A few minutes later, the scorching of his sun-burnt skin paled beside the heat of his shame as his father carried him back to their house.

Sevrin put a hand to his face to ease the burning pain and it came away slick with green blood. Startled back to the moment,

he sat up and tried to get his bearings. Moving proved to be a mistake; the world swirled around him and he doubled over vomiting. He remained there until the smell of his own blood and puke proved sufficient motivation to rise, very slowly this time, to his feet. There was a loud crashing as several broken supply crates tumbled to the deck, and Sevrin groggily realized he had been lying beneath them. That last hit had blown him back into the supply room, headfirst into a bulkhead. How long had he been unconscious?

Fighting down the nausea, he made his way carefully back through the head. All power seemed to be out, and he had only the dim light from the emergency glow strips to go by. The door back to the bridge would not open. He pried open the manual controls, but they would not respond either. That was when he noticed the red warning glow from the atmosphere gauge next to the manual door controls. Negative pressure. Sevrin stumbled back from the door, realizing that the reason it would not open was because only hard vacuum lay on the other side.

Suppressing an increasing sense of unease, he tried to open a channel to auxiliary control from the wall intercom, but the communications circuits appeared to be dead as well. He went back to the supply closet and after a few minutes of searching found his communicator, smashed beyond repair. Another wave of dizziness washed over him, and Sevrin decided there was nothing constructive he could accomplish here; it was time to report to sickbay. Crossing to the other end of the service corridor, he was relieved when the hatch to the descending spiral staircase opened easily. He started down the narrow staircase slowly and carefully. The hatch on the first landing was open, and he saw that Deck 2 also appeared to be deserted and without power.

Sevrin continued down towards the main deck, but had to stop and sit after another half flight. He wanted nothing more than to sleep, but was fairly sure that would be a poor idea in his present condition. Instead, he ran through an old Vulcan mental discipline; isolating his will to survive apart from the complaints of his flesh. So focused was his concentration that he did not hear the two men coming up the stairwell until they were almost upon him. They were talking to each other, and Sevrin did not recognize them by voice. In fact, he realized, he did not recognize what language they were speaking at all. He felt a tingle of adrenaline but could not think of a practical purpose for it in his current condition. Instead, he shrank in the shadows of the dark staircase and watched as two Romulan men, one obviously a soldier and one who looked more like a technician, climbed up to the landing below him and exited the stairwell onto Deck 3. Sevrin remained as still and as silent as he could as he listened to their voices recede into the distance.

Once he felt they were far enough away, he turned and climbed back up to Deck 1 as quickly as he dared. Searching through the ruined supply room again, he found the phaser he had originally intended to cut through the bulkhead with. The emitter on the pistol frame was shattered, but the Type-I handphaser clipped to its spine appeared to be functional. He was about to rush back downstairs when he stopped and considered his situation logically. The Romulans he had seen had been walking with their weapons holstered and in no great urgency. He could tell from the familiar sounds that *Mallory* was cruising steadily at warp, not engaging in combat maneuvers. His initial rush had therefore been unwise. There was no battle to join at present; his ship had already been defeated and seized by the enemy. He owed his current liberty to good fortune and he was going to have to be much more careful if he wished to retain it.

Sevrin considered his options and decided there was still nothing to be gained by remaining up there. Abandoning any thoughts of heading to the main deck, he returned to the stairwell and descended, much more cautiously this time, back to Deck 2. Doing his best to remain concealed, he listened intently. After a

moment's focus it was apparent that his earlier appraisal had been mistaken: he heard another person down the corridor towards the bow. This was logical: the ship's photon tubes were located in that direction and were probably guarded. After listening a few more minutes without hearing anyone else, he walked as quietly as he could onto the deck and headed astern. The aft section of Deck 2 contained a few small offices, whose doors were also open.

Sevrin realized he did not have much time. The doors were probably left open so that the guard could periodically make rounds and easily inspect them. A quick sweep of the first two offices yielded nothing of value, but the desk in the third office contained exactly what he was looking for: a PADD, which looked to be in good condition. He sat beneath the desk to provide himself some degree of concealment and switched on the tablet. Although power was out on this deck, the main computer was online, and accessible via wireless link. Sevrin's next shock came when he checked the date and found that he had been unconscious for 38.2 hours. *Plenty of time to secure the ship considering how badly we were outnumbered*, he thought. *But how much progress have they made unlocking the ship's systems?*

Accessing the main computer was not without risk: If the Romulans had complete access to the computer, he would be detected the instant he logged in, and soldiers would probably be sent to capture or kill him. But there was little to be gained by sitting in the dark awaiting discovery, so Sevrin connected and began the authentication process. The first encouraging sign was that normal, password-only access was unavailable and he was immediately challenged for biometric identification. This meant that *Mallory's* crew had retained control after being boarded long enough to put the computer in emergency lockdown mode. Unfortunately, it also meant a retina scan and a whispered voiceprint ID that stressed his already frayed nerves. Fortunately there was still no sign of any Romulans nearby, and Sevrin was soon online. He went straight to the diagnostics and began assessing the current state of *Mallory's* systems, looking for information about just how bad his situation was.

Briefing Room, *USS Mallory* Romulan Border 4 August 2573; Eagle +2 Days

Artex sat in a briefing room on *Mallory's* main deck, waiting impatiently for Commander Tarus and his aide to return from auxiliary control so they could wrap up the morning briefing. The situation on the captured ship was even worse than he had feared. Progress on unlocking the ship's systems had been very slow, due in no small part to the squadron commander's attitude toward their assignment. The news that he would not be bringing a captured ship home as a trophy had not sat well with the commander; the fact that his prize would be expended to support an attack by a different cohort led by an officer from a competing house even less so. Condemning the operation as "an obvious suicide mission," he had refused to part with anything more than a handful of technicians and soldiers. Tarus's political connections had actually been quite handy in wrangling a couple of extra squads of soldiers. Artex supposed he ought to be grateful for this, but he felt more resentful than anything else.

Artex got up to stretch his legs and tried to straighten the unfamiliar shirt he was wearing. Since coming aboard, his team had appropriated enemy uniforms and styled their hair in a Vulcan fashion in case they needed to interact with any hostiles. Julian's tunic had come from *Mallory's* highest ranking Vulcan crewman, the former science officer, and its soft blue color irritated him. If he had to impersonate the enemy, he would have preferred to be wearing one of the red shirts the Federation warriors wore, not this nurse's uniform. The rest of his team did not seem bothered by their disguises. The humans from the Intelligence team looked downright comfortable in Earther garb. Centurion Doe, the hu-

man from the Orions, wore a command gold uniform and had adopted a noticeable swagger since assuming his role as commanding officer. Bearing little resemblance to *Mallory's* former captain, Doe was impersonating a much younger officer. If questioned, he would say that most of the ship's senior officers had been killed in battle; an easy story to sell since it was basically true. Commander Tarus had spoken highly of Doe's autonomy and cleverness under pressure, but Doe was a bit too smug for Artex's taste.

Tarus and his aide returned from auxiliary control. Tarus looked bemused; his aide looked even paler than usual. "I'm sorry for the interruption, but I have just received a priority one message direct from Imperial Command." He hesitated a moment and then said, "Tribune Artex, perhaps we should speak privately."

"I'd rather keep everyone informed of any new developments," Artex said. "As you pointed out earlier, it's a small ship."

"Very well," Tarus said. "Our mission has been altered considerably. The attack on the repair depot has been canceled. We are to proceed at once to Federation Battle Station R-1. Posing as a damaged ship in need of repair, we will attack the base and disable its long-range sensors, facilitating an attack by a flanking squadron. I await your order to change course and begin preparations on a revised plan."

"Change course and begin preparations at once," Artex said, standing to glare at Tarus. "And give us the room." He waited until everyone but Tarus had filed out of the compartment before angrily demanding to know why these orders had come to Tarus's attention and not to him.

"I don't know," Tarus said calmly. "Presumably it was faster to route it directly via Intelligence than going through Fleet. I did ask to speak with you privately, Tribune."

"Regardless, as the officer commanding this mission I should be directly notified of any changes in orders. I am not a proxy."

"I understand your frustration," Tarus said. He sat at the conference table, unmoved by the fact that Julian was still standing. "But you need to accept that this is likely to be fairly common, especially once we are behind enemy lines. I may be receiving intelligence directly from field operatives."

"In the future, you will forward any communications received directly to me," Artex said.

"I cannot agree to that," Tarus said calmly, but firmly. "I have responsibilities and sources of information beyond our immediate assignment which are highly classified and which you have no need to know. I do not say this to challenge your authority, Tribune; it is simply a fact. However I will bring any further intelligence or communication which directly affects this mission to you immediately and in person, and I will not change my people's orders without clearing it with you first. Is this satisfactory?"

"There is little about this mission which is satisfactory," Artex grumbled, "but that will be acceptable." Allowing curiosity to supplant his frustration, Julian sat next to Tarus and gestured towards the stack of data cards before him. "What is the reason for the change of plans?"

"Lack of targets," Tarus said, punctuated with a short choking sound that Artex realized was this man's version of a chuckle. He slotted one of the data cards and pulled up a map with battle diagrams on the main viewer. "Based on the after-action reports, the first battles in this sector were less than decisive. The enemy ships were forewarned, probably because of the botched attacks on *Republic* further north. Hopefully Commander Taalar had the good sense to die in battle or else it is going to go hard on him. At any rate, *Mallory* was the only ship we got from this division; the others are falling back with only minor damage. The fleet is maneuvering to cut off their most direct retreat path, which would be to Battle Station R-1. Admiral Dieron hopes to have forces in position to hit the base before additional Federation fleet elements can gather there to mount an effective defense. Loss of the base will shatter the enemy's ability to mount any counter-

offensive in this sector and secure the left flank of the main invasion corridor completely."

Artex nodded understanding. "If we are successful in knocking out the base's long-range sensors, they will be very vulnerable. Our forces would not need to rely on their cloaking devices, allowing them to strike swiftly and with less concern about fuel. It is a worthy task."

"I agree," Tarus said, and they sat in silence for a moment, studying the map. "You have not commented about the increased challenges we will face. Our odds of escape are not good."

Artex shrugged. "Our chances of surviving the original plan were so low it hardly seemed worth the comparison."

Tarus made the choking sound again. "Spoken like a true Praetorian. Although Centurion Jones is working on something promising that I will brief you on later. Right now, I must speak with 'Captain' Doe and make sure he is up to speed on recent events."

Artex nodded dismissal. After a few more minutes of brooding he left for the adjacent auxiliary control room and prepared to take the *Mallory* further into Federation space than any Romulan had gone before.

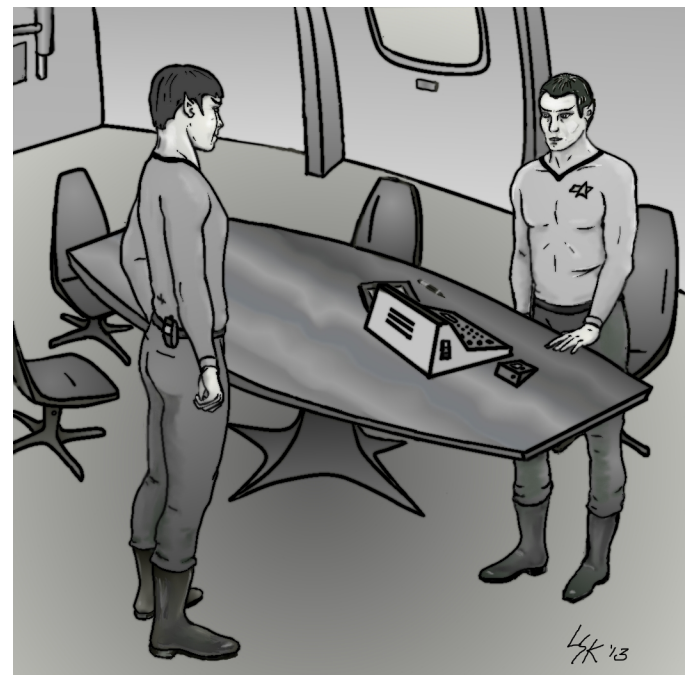
USS Mallory

Romulan Border 5 August 2573; Eagle +3 Days

Sevrin sat back from the computer terminal and reviewed his work, pleased and frustrated at the same time by the progress he had made. On the plus side, he had full access to the functional parts of the computer and had covered his tracks with obstacles that should take weeks for an enemy computer specialist to unravel.

Of particular importance had been gaining control of the ship's internal sensors, both to inform him of the Romulans' locations and to conceal his own signature. Accomplishing this task allowed him to move about in a limited area of the ship while minimizing risk of detection. It had been wise not to proceed immediately to sickbay; the concentration of Romulans was heaviest on Deck 4, the main deck. Instead he had spent the past six hours working at a terminal in a cargo hold down on Deck 6.

Another positive discovery was that there did not seem to be as many Romulans aboard as Sevrin would have expected. Even accounting for the fact that the internal sensors were dam-



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aged in some areas of the ship, he estimated that there were only about 40 Vulcanoid life forms aboard, including himself. The fact that Vulcans and Romulans were almost indistinguishable on sensors no doubt contributed to the enemy's ignorance of him thus far. The Romulans appeared to have concentrated their presence on the forward third of the ship's circumference between decks 3 and 5. Smaller detachments were present at a few critical locations such as main engineering, security, the weapons stations, and (somewhat surprisingly) the shuttle bay. There was a large concentration of Romulans in and around the auxiliary control room; presumably they were operating the ship from there. There were also about 20 human signatures. *The Romulans must have taken some of the surviving crew prisoner to help them run the ship.*

Why the Romulans had not simply put more of their own people on board rather than relying on captives was a mystery to Sevrin. Also troubling was the approach they had taken to unlocking *Mallory's* systems. Rather than gaining proper control of the main computer, the Romulans had taken the more expedient approach of transferring to manual control certain critical systems such as weapons, propulsion, communications, and life support. That would make sense in the scenario of a hasty capture, where they needed to get the captured ship back behind the lines quickly and there was a potential for hostilities en route. But judging from the earlier battle the enemy enjoyed a significant numerical advantage in this sector. Why the rush? And most troubling, where were they going in such a hurry? Sevrin had no access to navigation, but he did have access to the astronomy lab, which was sufficient to determine that they were definitely not headed back towards Romulan space as he would have expected. *So, I'm on board a Trojan horse,* he thought to himself.

A lance of pain shot through his abdomen, so intense that he doubled over and it took several minutes of regulated breathing exercises until he had mastered it enough to continue functioning. Not wanting to risk a trip to sickbay, he had found a medkit, bandaged his obvious wounds, and shot himself full of painkillers and stimulants. When he felt the effect of the stimulants wearing off, he had raided the galley for a box of the noxious but effective energy drinks popular with his human shipmates. He had hoped to find a way to access ship-to-shore communications; summoning assistance was the best hope for the surviving crew. Failing that, it was his duty to at least warn Star Fleet Command that the Romulans were up to something with *Mallory*. Unfortunately, he had been completely unsuccessful at accessing communications remotely. If he was going to get a message out, he would need to find a way to do it manually.

The cramps flared up again and he gripped the console to steady himself while he contemplated his next course of action. It was an option of course to simply surrender himself. Contrary to the trivideos, the Romulans did take prisoners, as clearly evidenced by the ship's sensors. He had also read reports that Romulans were fascinated by their Vulcan cousins; he would presumably be decently treated by his captors. Ironically, his ostensible enemies might even treat him better than his former shipmates who, he felt, had never valued his work. Not to mention the fact that it was completely possible that he would fall over dead if he didn't get proper medical attention soon.

He allowed this fantasy to play across his thoughts as he stood up and straightened himself. Noticing his reflection in the offline monitors, he paused to stare at the haggard face of the man in the Star Fleet uniform and felt a clarity of purpose. *I have a duty. I will find a way to carry out my Captain's last order and warn the fleet of what has transpired here.* Focusing on that thought made him feel better, even though he had no idea how he was going to manage the task. He considered his priorities through his still-throbbing headache and decided that there was simply no way he could accomplish anything further in his current condition. It was time for a calculated risk. The sensors

showed that only one human signature had occupied the chief surgeon's office for the past several hours and that this person was logged into the computer with the credentials of the junior medical officer, Lieutenant Cipes. He sent a private message to the terminal suggesting Cipes inventory his medical supply closet in sickbay in 15 minutes and headed for the aft stairwell.

With the regular entrance to sickbay apparently under guard, this was going to require a creative approach. Fortunately, the Romulans were using the forward staircases almost exclusively to move around the ship. The turbolift system was wrecked, but that probably worked in the captors' favor as it made it easier to restrict their prisoners' access to a very limited portion of the ship. Sevrin took the stairwell up to Deck 4 and, seeing no nearby Romulan traces on his PADD, switched to the adjacent vertical shaft to access the maintenance crawlway between decks.

The discovery that the artificial gravity had been disabled in the shaft came as a rude surprise as his first step onto the ladder sent him flying upwards, careening off the walls of the tube. After a few moments of floundering Sevrin steadied himself, recovered his PADD before it floated up to the bridge and chastised himself for his sloppiness. Zeroing the gravity in the shafts was an old Star Fleet trick for moving heavy gear between decks when the lifts were offline; the shafts had separate gravity controls specifically to accommodate this. He should have realized that other starfaring empires would adapt similar practices.

Carefully entering the access way between decks, he crawled to port, counting until he reached the third ventilation cover, which he pried off as quietly as he could in the narrow confines. He slipped through the small vent and hung from the opening for a few seconds before dropping. His feet went out from under him when he landed and he sat down hard on the deck, feeling very vulnerable and somewhat foolish. He crawled into the corner of the small supply closet and waited expectantly, his phaser trained on the door.

After a couple of minutes he decided his clumsy entrance had not alerted anyone to his presence. Now it was just a matter of waiting to see if Doctor Cipes had received his message and was able and willing to comply. Sevrin rested his head against the wall and tried to calculate how long the climb from the lower decks had taken him. He was unconscious in seconds.

Auxiliary Control, *USS Mallory* Romulan Border 5 August 2573; Eagle +3 Days

Artex sat in the center seat of *Mallory's* auxiliary control room reviewing the latest status reports from the combined teams under his command. Tarus's computer expert had made almost zero progress with the main computer and his complaints of increasing difficulties were starting to sound to him like excuses. He assigned his new tech specialist to assist Intelligence with the computer. Even though Tev was still very much an unknown quantity in Artex's mind, his work supervising the restoration of warp power had been adequate and timely. Lal had been quick to boast that she had completed her task of unlocking the weapons systems faster, but considering how few functional weapons *Mallory* had at the time, it was hardly a fair comparison. He caught himself slouching again and sat up straight in annoyance. The command chair was like everything else on the Federation frigate: comfortable and soft.

"Contact ahead," reported Lal, who was covering sensors and weapons. "Multiple vessels bearing zero-three-zero relative, range 150 kilo-kilometers, heading three-zero-five true. Their speed is Warp 2.5; we are closing."

"Sound alert level two," Artex ordered, and walked over to Lal's station, reading the details over her shoulder as they came in. "Mostly smaller hulls, close formation... might be an enemy convoy."

"I concur," Lal said. "Their heading almost matches ours. It

is just the route you would expect if they were fleeing back toward their base.”

“Let’s give them a wide berth before they spot us,” Artex said turning towards the helm. “Centurion Smith, slow to Warp 1 and calculate how much delay to target there would be if we changed course to...”

“Too late, Sir, they’ve spotted us!” Lal said. “We are being scanned by high-grade sensors. One of them must be a police ship or a small naval unit.”

“They are hailing us,” Centurion Li reported from Communications. “Transponder code identifies the sender as the police cutter *Beckett*. Attempting to decode message.”

Artex locked gazes with Tarus. *This is where your team either saves or kills us*, Artex thought as the Intelligence officer moved to observe his man at the communications station. Although they had control over the physical communications equipment, they lacked access to the latest Federation codes, which were still locked up in the main computer. Tarus’s team had brought the latest broken enemy codes on board with them; Artex could only hope the Federation had not yet changed them.

“Decoding failed,” Li reported, his voice commendably calm considering their cover was about to be blown. “Enemy ciphertext does not decrypt with any known key.”

“Increase to Alert status one!” Artex ordered.

Centurion Li looked up at Tarus in askance. “Proceed,” Tarus said, still icy calm.

Li loaded the most recent code they had and opened a channel to the Federation police cutter. “*Beckett*, this is the *USS Mallory*. Our communications systems are damaged from an earlier battle; we’re running on backups here. Please repeat your last signal.”

Tension was high as they waited for a response. An eternity of seconds later, Li’s board lit up again. “Another incoming signal from the police ship. Decoding now,” Li said.

The speaker on the console next to Li crackled to life almost immediately. “Message repeat: Attention ship identifying as *USS Mallory*, this is the Federation police ship *Beckett*, J.R. Simmons commanding, leading convoy one-three-seven-eight Romeo Foxtrot. Please confirm your identity and state your intentions.”

They bought it! Tarus smiled at Artex and waved Centurion Doe over towards the command chair before heading back to his station. The rest of the crew took their assigned places for visual communication, and Artex reluctantly moved to the science station. “Captain” Doe strolled nonchalantly to the center seat as if he’d been born to sit in it.

“Open a visual channel to the *Beckett*,” Doe ordered, and in a few moments a stocky, middle-aged human who looked like every human cop Artex had ever seen in his life appeared on the viewscreen. “This is Lieutenant Don Lassiter, commanding the *Mallory*. It’s a pleasure to see a friendly face, Captain Simmons. What’s the status of your convoy?”

“Likewise, I’m sure,” Simmons responded cautiously. “Our ships are undamaged and in good order. I’ve canceled the convoy’s normal schedule in the wake of the recent attacks and we are escorting them back to Battle Station Romeo One. Is that your destination as well?”

“Sure enough is,” Doe drawled. “We had a nasty scrap with a King Eagle and are falling back for repairs. I’ll have my communications officer exchange intelligence updates with you before we move on.”

“Move on? If our destination is the same then I formally request that *Mallory* join our convoy,” Simmons said. “The civilian ships would benefit from the extra protection. And if you don’t mind me saying so, it looks from your condition that you would benefit from traveling as a group as well.”

“I completely understand,” Doe said. “But I am concerned about delaying our arrival at the base. We have been ordered to reach the base with all haste.”

“Understood, Captain, but we could very well be at war with the Romulans! If I may be perfectly frank, there are those in the police who already feel that Star Fleet is abandoning them. Must I report back to my superiors that a naval frigate is refusing to provide escort protection to a convoy heading to the same port?”

Artex stiffened at the direction the conversation was taking. The last thing they wanted was anyone calling in their position; the less Star Fleet knew about the *Mallory*, the better. Fortunately, Doe did not seem rattled by the officer’s threat.

“Of course not,” Doe responded. “Captain Simmons, there’s no need to start posturing, we’re all on the same team here. It’s just that there are certain... *peculiarities* to our orders that must be considered. I’ll tell you what: I think this matter would be best settled in person. We’ll join the convoy, temporarily, and start exchanging intelligence and critical supplies. Why don’t you and a representative from the civilian ships beam over here and we’ll talk this out. Then we can both file an accurate report.”

Simmons thought this over for a moment, then nodded. “Very well, Captain. I’ll contact the merchant ships and make arrangements to come aboard your ship. An hour shall we say?”

“That would be perfect,” Doe said, smiling reassuringly. “I look forward to meeting you. *Mallory* out.” He waited until the screen switched off. “Helm, join the convoy’s formation and match course and speed. Weapons, secure the crew from alert status.”

Smith changed course immediately in response to Doe’s order. Lal looked over at Artex for confirmation first. Artex rose and nodded towards her. “You will all follow Mr. Doe’s orders as if they were my own as long as he sits in the command chair.” And then turning towards Doe, “You are relieved now, Centurion. Turn the con over to Lal and join me and Mister Tarus in the briefing room.”

A few minutes later, the three of them sat around the table in the adjacent briefing room. “May I start by offering congratulations to both teams,” Tarus said. “Everyone performed well in a tight situation.”

“I am impressed by the cleverness of you and Mister Li,” Artex allowed. “But I am quite concerned about ‘Captain’ Doe over here. Centurion, you took great liberties with the guidelines you were given for dealing with any Earthers we encountered. And for the gods’ sake, what were you thinking inviting two enemy captains onboard?”

“Sir, I was under a lot of pressure back there,” Doe said. “Especially when that cop threatened to name us in his report. It was stressed to me that we should avoid this if at all possible. As for asking them aboard, I thought a face-to-face meeting would help relieve any suspicions they have. Besides, Sir, I’m a con man. I work better in person.” His informal tone did not sit well with Artex, but at least he had dropped the ridiculous accent he had used when talking to the Federation ship.

“I concur,” Tarus said. “It’s important not to raise their suspicions. Letting them come aboard and enjoy our hospitality takes them off their guard and shows we have nothing to hide.”

“We have a great deal to hide!” Artex exclaimed. “All we need is for one guard, one technician to walk down the wrong corridor or use the wrong channel on the intercom and we are exposed. There is a difference between cleverness and recklessness! Centurion, you are never to take a risk like this again without my direct approval, is that clear?”

“Perfectly, Sir.”

“Fortunately for us, the transporter room next door is functional,” Artex said, running through the details aloud. “We can have them escorted directly in here by Smith or Jones. That will mitigate the risk to a large extent. The next issue to discuss is how we will break away from the convoy without arousing any further suspicions.”

“I’ve been thinking about that,” Tarus said, “I propose that we alter our strategy and remain with the convoy.”

Artex looked at them as if both Intelligence men were in-

sane, but Tarus continued, "Hear me out, Tribune. The convoy is headed our way and they're perfect cover. If we gain their trust, they might even help us out should anyone ask us any questions we might have trouble answering. And they aren't going that much slower than we were since we have been trying to conserve this ship's remaining fuel. Best of all, I have an idea how we might persuade them not to report encountering us."

Tarus proceeded to outline a story for Doe to tell the Earthers that, like everything these Intelligence men suggested, struck Artex as both clever and very risky. But in the end he agreed it was their best play. They spent the next half-hour working out details and backstory with Doe.

"I should return to the control room before our guests arrive," Tarus said. "But there is one final matter I wish to discuss first. Our success in bluffing them into using an older code earlier has tremendous potential beyond our current mission. We now have recording of their original message in a new enemy code and a presumably identical message in an older code which we have already broken. Such data would be priceless to our code breakers. We should use one of our drop buoys to send this home before we proceed any further."

Mallory had failed to launch any of her log buoys before her capture. Shortly after coming aboard Tarus's team had modified her three surviving buoys to transmit their contents using a single-burst, narrow-beam transmission to a Romulan base. More than that, a Romulan squadron was tailing them at a distance (intending to attack Battle Station R-1) and could also read the buoy's transmission. The buoys would allow them to send critical messages back to Imperial Command with a minimal risk of detection even if enemy forces were nearby. At the moment, it was the only means of communicating with Imperial Command because the *Mallory's* long-range communications systems were still offline due to combat damage and computer obstacles. (Repairing that system was not high on the priority list, not compared to weapons, warp drive, and life support.) No one on *Mallory* wanted to risk anyone detecting such a transmission, something that was not so much a concern before they met the convoy.

Log buoys were designed to be very hard to detect in the first place, and this one would be set to self-destruct after it transmitted. Anyone detecting the transmission and closing in would find no Romulans at the point of origin. Having only three buoys meant that they needed to use them sparingly, but Artex agreed that this was important enough to warrant expending one. If the text of the two messages from the *Beckett* were indeed identical (and knowing how police were about procedure, that was a good bet), they would be sending home a Rosetta stone that could be used to crack the enemy's latest code and gain a significant advantage. He gave his approval and waited with Doe until the Earthers arrived.

Briefing Room, *USS Mallory* Romulan Border 5 August 2573; Eagle +3 Days

Two Federation captains beamed aboard about 15 minutes later. They were greeted by Li in the transporter room and escorted directly into the briefing room. Doe introduced his officers using their borrowed identities. Simmons introduced the Rigellian with him as Patel, master of one of the merchant ships and apparently the speaker for the civilians in the convoy.

Doe made sure both men were comfortable and offered refreshments before beginning. "Thank you for taking the time to beam over. I think we were getting off on the wrong foot earlier and I'm glad to have the opportunity to clear the air a little."

"There's really just one issue that concerns us," Simmons said, "and that's getting everyone safely to Battle Station R-1. I don't understand why Star Fleet would deny us the additional protection since this entire sector is crawling with Romulans."

"That makes perfect sense. So let me begin by saying that

I've decided to escort your convoy all the way to base," Doe said.

The two Federation captains looked at each other, clearly a bit surprised. Finally, Simmons said, "Thank you, Captain, we're both very reassured to hear that. But if you don't mind me asking, why all the fuss?"

Doe's expression turned serious. "I apologize for that, but you do understand that this ship is under orders to be somewhere and the entire Sixth Fleet is counting on every ship to be where it is supposed to be. Moreover, this ship needs to be repaired and back in service as quickly as possible. Staying with your convoy will delay us for several hours. But there is more to it than that. To fully explain, I must first ask that this discussion not go further than this room. May I have your word on that?"

Both men hesitated, but eventually answered in the affirmative, probably out of curiosity if nothing else.

"Good," Doe said. "Now as you know, we got hit hard by the Romulans. Not just here, but all across the border. Make no mistake, this is an all-out invasion and they threw everything they had at us. As you can see, my ship was badly damaged; my captain and most of the senior crew were killed by those devils. But the sad truth is, we got off lucky compared to the rest of the fleet. I don't need to tell you how neglected and thinly spread the Sixth Fleet has been since the war started."

Both men agreed immediately with that point. It was well known that most of Star Fleet was occupied with the war with the Klingons on the Federation's western border. Doubtless they felt neglected and vulnerable. *And scared*, Artex thought with satisfaction.

"What you don't know is that the invasion has hit the Third Division commander, Fleet Captain Yefimov, pretty hard. He has decided that it's the duty of his remaining ships to launch a counter offensive to threaten the enemy's flank. My orders are to link up with the two surviving ships in our division and prepare to attack as soon as possible."

"With only three ships?" Simmons asked. "That sounds crazy."

"It is exactly that," Doe shook his head sadly. "Have either of you ever met Captain Yefimov?"

"I can't say I've had the pleasure," Simmons said. Patel also shook his head.

"Neither have I," Doe continued. "Captain Sanchez always spoke well of him, but these recent orders make no sense at all. Most of his ships are in no better shape than *Mallory's*. It's suicide, pure and simple. Maybe he's not the man the skipper thought he was, or maybe he's lost perspective under the strain of the past few days. I don't know..."

Doe paused and took a deep breath, appearing to struggle with deep emotions. "Regardless, I have had to make a very difficult decision. Orders are orders, but I also have to consider the lives of the men and women who are now my responsibility. And I have decided that I cannot just throw their lives away. I have decided to refuse the Fleet Captain's suicide order, but without long-range communications, I cannot even tell him that. Instead, I am taking this ship back to Battle Station Romeo One, where I will surrender myself into custody. It is, in my opinion, the only responsible thing to do for the men and women now under my command. A court-martial will decide if I'm a wise leader or a craven coward. Given the disaster that has befallen Sixth Fleet, they'll probably blame the entire situation on me."

Both Federation captains were quiet while they digested all this. Finally Patel said, "It sounds like you have been put in a terrible position, Captain."

"I just want to do what's right by my crew," Doe said sadly. "If they hang me out to dry, so be it, but there has been enough madness. And there will be plenty of war."

"Why are you telling us all this?" Simmons asked. "Is there something you are asking of us?"

"Only one thing," Doe said. "We have not been making our

regular reports since the Romulan attack and the fleet captain's crazy new orders. They probably have us marked as missing in action by now. It would make things much simpler for me if you agreed not to report that we have joined the convoy. We'll stick with you from here to the base and once we're in dock they can sort everything out."

Artex watched the two Federation captains carefully as they considered the deal on the table. Protection for silence. The merchant captain was the first to speak.

"I can speak for the civilians in saying we have no problem with this. We're just grateful to have the extra protection."

Simmons thought about it a little longer. Finally he said, "As long as you stay with us all the way to the base, I don't really see a problem. It's not in my job description to keep track of Star Fleet's ships for them." The Federation police had been more than unhappy with Star Fleet since Day One, when idiotic orders had resulted in a dozen police cutters being slaughtered for nothing in a failed attempt to do Star Fleet's job for them.

"Thank you both very much for your understanding," Doe said. "If we stick together we'll all get through this to fight another day. Now, do you have any other concerns or problems we can help you with?"

Both men shook their heads. "Actually, Captain," Simmons said, "Maybe we can help you out. Your ship appears to have suffered major damage. I could spare a couple of engineers if you need help picking up the pieces over here."

"Thank you, Captain, I really appreciate your offer," Doe said. "I will pass it along to the chief engineer. I suspect he will decline, however. You know how territorial these guys can be with their engines. Besides that, we've already done just about everything that can be done with the supplies on board."

Artex was pleased at how well Doe had deflected the idea of more visitors coming aboard. Perhaps he was capable of learning after all.

"Now, we should discuss the supply situation," Doe said.

Both Federation captains stiffened at these words. "I expected such a request," Patel said brusquely, "And I will tell you right now that our ships do not have any spare supplies or cargo to be commandeered to support military operations. With the re-routing of our convoy we have barely enough fuel to make it back to base at this speed as it is, never mind the terrible financial losses we will suffer."

"Gentlemen, you misunderstand me," Doe said. "The sad truth is, with the crew casualties we've taken I've got plenty more beans than bodies over here. I thought that you all might need some extra food rations or other supplies."

"Thank you, Captain, that's very generous," Simmons said. "I'll ask my first officer to coordinate with your quartermaster."

"Good, good," Doe said. "I know everyone's exhausted and their nerves are shot. I don't want morale to become an issue too. Tell you what: for the past few months, Thursday has been ice cream night on *Mallory*. Captain Sanchez got a half dozen cases off of a tramp freighter just a week ago. Real strawberries and everything, not the replicated stuff. We should split it amongst the ships in the convoy. See if that and the extra protection doesn't lift peoples' spirits a little."

Nobody spoke for a moment, the two Federation captains clearly surprised by the direction of the conversation. Finally Patel said, "Certainly, Captain. I'm sure everyone would like that very much."

"Excellent," Doe said. He rose and shook each man's hand vigorously. "I'll have my logistics and tactical officers contact you to coordinate operations. Now if you'll excuse me, I must return to the auxiliary control room, the only bridge I have left. Thank you again for your understanding, and I look forward to sailing together."

With that Doe left the room. Li escorted the Earthmen back to the transporter room. Once they were safely back on their

respective ships, Artex summoned Tarus back to the briefing room and massaged his temples as he waited, feeling the beginnings of a truly epic headache in the making.

"You monitored the meeting from the auxiliary control room?" Artex asked, as soon as Tarus arrived.

"I did," Tarus said. "I thought Doe delivered the story well."

"That part of the meeting went fine," Artex said. "I am comfortable the civilians will not pose a problem. I am a little worried about the policeman; I think he may be suspicious."

"I agree," Tarus said. "His offer to send personnel aboard might have been an excuse for his men to poke around a little."

"Besides simply calling us in," Artex asked, "what other trouble do you think he could make for us?"

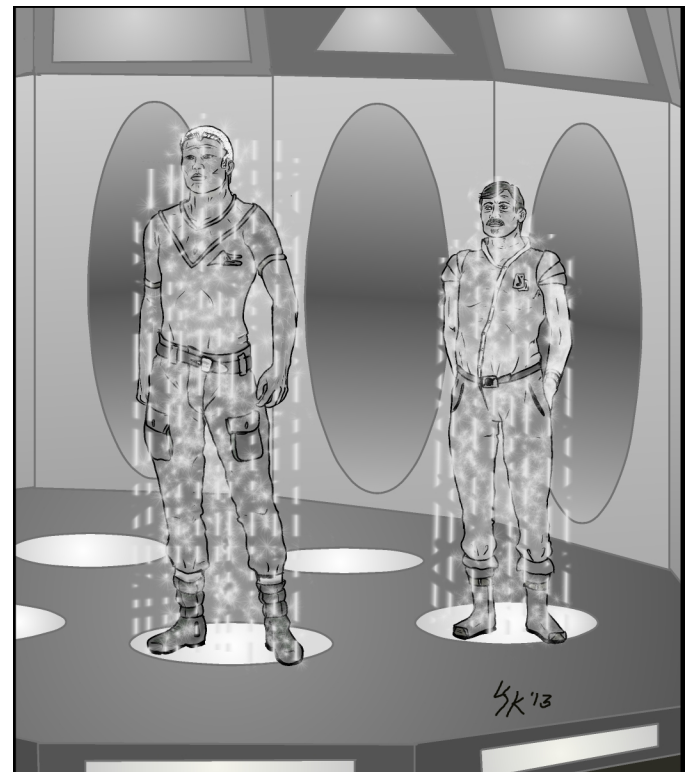
Tarus considered this a moment. "He could start quietly investigating us. He might request personnel dossiers and images of the crew members we are impersonating, but I doubt he could do so without breaking his word to keep silent about the presence of *Mallory* with the convoy."

"He might do that anyway," Artex said, "if he can convince himself that his word given to an officer shirking his duty is not binding. What has he to lose? How long do you think it would it take to get such information?"

"It's hard to say. It would take about three or four days for a Romulan police captain to get that kind of information. Since there is no 'Game of Houses' in the Federation they generally have a freer flow of information, but they also tend to have a lot of bureaucracy, which more or less cancels each other out. And there will no doubt be significant disruption caused by our invasion. Such a request would hardly be high priority. Considering our timetable, I don't think this will pose a great threat, but I agree we should watch him closely. Maybe we can come up with something else to assuage any lingering doubts he may have."

"Before we attempt any more contact with them, you need to have another long talk with 'Captain' Doe."

Tarus nodded agreement. "He's getting better, but he's still



too impulsive. The problem is that even though his loyalties are Romulan, his methods are still Orion. He supplicates when he should be authoritative and tries to bribe instead of earning trust.

"Speaking of which — what the hell is a 'strawberry'? Do we even have any of this stuff on board that he's promising them?"

Tarus's normally inscrutable expression faltered on this point. "I have no idea. I don't know where he got any of that from." He paused to consult his hand computer. "But he's right; whatever it is, the prize team's survey lists several cases of it in the cargo hold, in stasis storage." Tarus sighed quietly to himself. "It's the same problem: his overconfidence makes him very useful as an actor, but also very difficult to control. I will make it very plain to him that he needs to choose his words more carefully in the future."

"See that you do," Artex said and left the briefing room, hunting for headache medication.

Sick Bay, *USS Mallory* Romulan Border 5 August 2573; Eagle +3 Days

It was a sad commentary on the direction his life had taken, Doctor Jeffrey Cipes thought, that he was now receiving cryptic text messages, which led him to find dead Vulcans in his supply closet. As a young medic working on a backwater agricultural colony, joining the naval reserves had seemed like an easy way to pay for medical school and maybe see a little of the galaxy in the process. It was his uncle's fault really. He had taken the same path a decade earlier and had gone nowhere more exciting than a Cygnan hospital ship. Even when Star Fleet started calling up reservists to staff ships to wartime levels it hadn't seemed so bad. The war with the Klingons was far away, and some action against the occasional Romulan privateer had sounded exciting at the time. The past 72 hours had provided Cipes with more excitement than he could have wished for in a lifetime.

His next surprise came when he examined the battered body slumped in the corner and found he was still (marginally) alive. The ship's chief medical officer, now deceased, had always done the physicals for *Mallory's* non-human crew members, but Cipes recognized this unfortunate soul as one of the communications officers: Lieutenant Steprin or Sorpin or something like that. A physical exam revealed radiation poisoning and severe head trauma. His brain chemistry was all out of whack too, which meant he'd probably spent several days in one of the torporific regenerative cycles that old Terran medical journals used to call "Vulcan healing trances." That would explain why Cipes hadn't seen him in sickbay before now. It did nothing to answer the other questions racing through his mind. How did he manage to take a multi-day nap without being detected on a ship crawling with Romulans? How many other officers escaped? Was there a plan to retake the ship?

Cipes finished working on his patient's most immediate problems and paused to debate his next move. The worst of the lieutenant's injuries, such as the intra-cranial bleeding, had been easy enough to patch up with one of the field kits in the supply closet. The radiation poisoning was a bigger problem: he couldn't do anything about that without a full course of treatment in sickbay. There was no way to do that without the Romulan medical officer who had been periodically checking on him noticing. That meant he would have to surrender him to the enemy, who might just kill the poor guy anyway. Cipes had learned through bitter experience the importance of downplaying his patients' injuries. The most critically wounded crewmen (and all of the ships' surviving Marines) had been swiftly transferred out of sickbay to "an off-ship facility," which he strongly suspected meant the airlock. In the end, Cipes decided it was up to his patient to make an informed choice and to do it quickly before the Romulan doctor made another inspection tour. He loaded a spray hypo with an

unwise quantity of stimulants and brought the somewhat healthier-looking lieutenant back to consciousness.

Twenty minutes later, Cipes and Sevrin had swapped stories, leaving each only marginally better informed than they were before. Having been restricted to sickbay and his quarters, Cipes had only peripheral observations of the Romulans' operations to contribute, while Sevrin was limited to the information he'd gathered from the ship's computer so far. Trying not to show his disappointment that there were no other surviving crewmembers leading a resistance, Cipes explained the details of Sevrin's condition to him, stressing his need for definitive treatment.

Sevrin again felt the strong temptation to just hand himself over to the Romulans. As the only crewman at liberty, what could he realistically hope to accomplish? Surely the hopeless tactical situation and the need to treat his near-fatal injuries more than justified turning himself in. He wondered briefly what the captain would say about that, then realized what an illogical line of thought it was. *As the sole surviving line officer I am the commanding officer now. A broken man to lead a broken ship...*

"I won't be able to accept further treatment at this time," Sevrin finally said. "As the only officer at liberty, I have several duties I must perform, some of which will require your assistance."

Cipes looked for a moment like he would protest further, but then nodded understanding. "There are several seriously injured crew members here, so I can't leave sickbay for any length of time. But I'll do anything else I can. What's our plan, Sir?"

"It's better if you remain in sickbay anyway," Sevrin said. "If their doctor notices your absence, it will jeopardize the entire operation. According to the book, our primary objective is to attempt recapture of the ship, if possible. It is my judgment that we lack sufficient resources to accomplish this with only the two of us."

Mistaking this for an attempt at humor, Cipes grinned. "I agree, Sir."

"Our next highest priority," Sevrin continued, "is to inform Star Fleet Command of the *Mallory's* disposition. They may or may not be in a position to send assistance, but at the very least it is imperative that they be informed of the situation."

"Are you sure there's no way you can do that remotely?" Cipes asked. "Maybe with help from engineering? Most of the crewmen the Romulans spared were technicians and engineers; they're all working under Chief Rubanza. We might be able to sneak a message to her the same way you contacted me."

"There's no way to access communications through the computer," Sevrin said. "The system is offline due to combat damage. I could do it manually if I could get access to a functional transmitter, but they are all guarded. The log buoys are our best bet, assuming I can reach one of the launchers without detection." He paused for a moment. "However, your suggestion to attempt contact with Chief Rubanza is a good idea. She is probably unaware that the ship is headed anywhere other than a Romulan POW facility. I will order her to discreetly begin working on a way to immobilize or otherwise disable the ship if I am captured or killed in my efforts to summon help."

"So if plan A doesn't work out, plan B is to cripple the ship?" Cipes asked with a trace of anxiety. "Even if we're successful, the Romulans aren't going to take that well."

"There is no other alternative," Sevrin said firmly. "I don't know what the enemy's plan is, but I am certain that it will cost the lives of Federation servicemen and civilians. I will not allow the *Mallory* to be the instrument for their deaths."

Cipes nodded soberly, then brightened with a fresh sense of purpose. "Well, you'll certainly have our best effort for plan A then, Sir. Is there anything I can do from here?"

"As a matter of fact there is, Doctor," Sevrin said, getting carefully to his feet. "I have an idea that will improve my chances of avoiding detection and I require a prescription..."

**Galley, *USS Mallory*
Romulan Border 5 August 2573; Eagle +3 Days**

Two hours later, Sevrin was waiting patiently in the galley for a meal to be ordered. Shortly after tapping into the ship's internal sensors, he had written a small program to analyze the Romulans' movements, looking for patterns that would give him more information about their intentions. The analysis had yet to produce any insights into their intent, but it did highlight several potentially useful anomalies. One of these anomalies had just entered the mess hall, one deck above him.

The Romulans had apparently brought their own rations aboard as they made no use of the ship's dining facilities. The sole exception had been making his way through the menu of Vulcan dishes the ship's replicators offered at each meal break. After the soldier upstairs made his selection Sevrin was, for the first time in his Star Fleet career, pleased to see a bowl of *kahveeah* come out of the galley. Shipboard replicators were notorious amongst Vulcan servicemen for their truly terrible attempts to generate Vulcan seaweed dishes from synthetic proteins. But in this case, the heavily over-seasoned stew was ideal to mask the generous dose of tranquilizers Sevrin mixed into the dish before sending it upstairs on the conveyor.

Sevrin waited a full 10 minutes before cautiously making his way up the spiral staircase to the deck above. Entering the mess hall, he was relieved to find the Romulan soldier deeply unconscious, his head resting in a pool of sour-smelling gravy. Sevrin laid him out on the deck, quickly cleaned up the mess and consulted the internal sensor data on his PADD. There was no sign that anyone was heading towards the mess hall, nor was there any reason to think they would. Sevrin wagered that wandering off from the main group by himself had probably been against procedure, and not something the man would have spoken about with others. Just to be on the safe side, he dragged the Romulan down to the galley on Deck 5 where there was less chance of detection.

Once in the galley, Sevrin stripped the Romulan of his side-arm and tools, and began donning his uniform. His victim was a little taller than himself, making the fit loose but passable. Looking up the insignia with his PADD, Sevrin identified him as an ante-centurion, the Romulan equivalent of an ensign. He had been hoping for a higher-ranking officer, someone more likely to have details about the enemy mission and capabilities. But something was always better than nothing, so after a few moments of mental preparation, he melded minds with his captive.

Sevrin held the contact for less than a minute before his mind rejected the unwelcome intimacy. His ESP rating was fair, but he was not a trained psionicist. Lacking the training and discipline of a true psi master, it took him some time to isolate any useful information from the tides of raw emotion that had surged across the centurion's consciousness. His prisoner was a damage control specialist who had served on the King Eagle that had dealt *Mallory* her fatal blow. He had been a member of the prize team and then transferred to the command of another officer for a classified mission. The Romulans were apparently doing an excellent job of operational security, because the young ante-centurion knew absolutely nothing of the specifics of their mission. Nor did he know anything about his new commanding officer, except that he was afraid of him; a fact which Sevrin found interesting but not particularly useful at the moment.

Sevrin's mind was also awash with a plethora of useless and unwanted details of the man's life: his friends aboard his former ship, his family back home, his hopes for promotion. All of which only made what Sevrin had to do next that much more difficult. He knew that his lack of skill in filtering what had been shared between them worked both ways, and the centurion would discover equally strong memories from Sevrin's mind when he awoke. With the odds heavily stacked against him as it was, Sevrin

needed to keep the enemy unaware of him as long as possible, and he had no time or facility to risk maintaining a prisoner.

Sevrin took out the spray hypo and, burying the lingering tendrils of the Romulan's memories in the deepest corner of his mind, emptied the entire vial of tranquilizers into his jugular vein. He was surprised how little reaction there was: just a soft sigh of exhaled breath as the centurion's life left his body. After double-checking that he was indeed dead, Sevrin dragged the body to a freezer in the corner of the galley and stuffed him into it. An airlock would have been better but Sevrin judged it too risky to drag a corpse halfway across the ship. The temperature and thickness of the door would make the body almost impossible to find without a full physical search and Sevrin reasoned he would already have completed his mission or been killed by the time that happened.

***USS Mallory*
Romulan Border 6 August 2573; Eagle +4 Days**

Artex was impressed at the size of the frigate's computer core. Even with more laboratory and scientific facilities to support than an Imperial ship would have, he was surprised how much tonnage *Mallory's* architects had allocated to the main computer. Walking by aisle after aisle of duotronic components he wondered how much tactical advantage, if any, the Earthers gained from all this processing power.

There was a lot of background noise from the racks, enough that his arrival went unnoticed by the room's other occupants. Tev was running an elaborate program across three of the overhead screens. Jones had crawled waist-deep into one of the access panels under the main terminal and was working at something that involved a lot of sparks and swearing. Julian watched them work for a few minutes, then cleared his throat loudly.

"Tribune Artex reporting as ordered," he said dryly.

Both officers shot to their feet, Jones cracking her head on the console on the way up. Artex waved them at ease in mid salute. "I would hear your report now."

"Yes, Sir," Tev said. "As you ordered, I have reviewed the attempts made so far in gaining full access to the main computer. At my direction, we have made over a dozen additional attempts, using multiple vectors of attack. All have resulted in failure even though they should have worked."

"And this is why you have summoned me here?" Artex said testily. "To report your failure in person? If you wanted to throw yourself on your sword, Centurion Jones could have acted as your witness without taking up more of my time."

"Sir, it is important that you understand why these attempts are not working," Jones said. "We're not saying these attacks should have worked as an excuse but a statement of fact. They failed because the defenses were altered continuously to adapt to the strategies we were using. These changes were more specific and more thorough than any automated program could possibly manage. In other words, we believe we face a live opponent who is actively working against our efforts."

"If true, that would be a very serious problem, but I don't see how this is the only or even the most likely conclusion. Adaptive security programs are nothing new. Maybe our enemy has simply come up with a very good one. They certainly don't lack for resources," Artex said, gesturing towards the array of hardware behind him.

"True," Jones said, "but even a revolution in artificial intelligence would not explain the adaptability and initiative we have seen in this case."

"There is one more thing," Tev said. "When our last attack failed, I tried a different approach. I located their physical backup media and loaded it onto a portable computer offline from the main system. I encountered none of the problems we have seen here. I was able to extract the primary password keychains and

run an encryption cracker against them. The entire process took less than three hours."

Jones looked like she'd just swallowed a sour pickle. Apparently Tev had not seen fit to let her know he was taking an end run around her work. "Now we're getting somewhere," Artex said, his opinion of his new teammate going up a notch. "Centurion Jones, that makes your problem moot. With the master passwords there is no longer a need for brute force attacks."

"So I believed as well," Tev said, before Jones had a chance to regain her bearings. "But they don't work. All of the administrative passwords have been changed since the last backup, which was only an hour before the battle. Nobody, not even the most paranoid security officer, would design a system that could change its own root passcodes automatically. How would you ever get back in? It might be reasonable for the system to have an automatic self-destruct, as a last resort, but password shifts only make sense if there is someone out there to use them. Jones is right; someone is working against us."

Artex frowned. "Who is it you think opposes you?"

"There are only a few possibilities," Tev said. "Most of those who would have the knowledge and the access to be this effective were killed in the fighting. My guess would be the current engineering chief or one of her direct subordinates."

"On this point we disagree," Jones spoke up. "My team interrogated the human prisoners before clearing them to work and we have been monitoring them closely since. They believe they are headed for a prison camp and that cooperation will improve their chances of survival. There have been no signs of counter-work or sabotage."

"I'm not completely sold on this idea," Artex said. "I still think it's probably a trick, but I can't afford to ignore the possibility. I'm convinced that there is no profit in wasting any more time on this effort; all of the critical systems are on manual override anyway. You will both cease work on the main computer. Centurion Jones, you will report back to Commander Tarus. Tell him I want you and any other techs that can be spared to do a risk assessment on our ability to manage the ship without complete control of the main computer. Identify any additional systems that are not currently under manual control that should be. Also, explore any possible threats we have not accounted for. Centurion Tev, get down to engineering and assist in the supervision of the humans. Watch them like a hawk. If you see signs that their chief or any of the other Earthers are up to something, throw them in the brig and contact me at once."

Tev raised his eyebrows in surprise. "Such actions warrant death."

"Of course they do, but we have barely enough bodies to run this ship as it is. You are not to execute anyone without my direct order. Besides, if someone has been changing passwords, that means they should know what the current passwords are. I'm sure our friends from Intelligence have some very effective means of extracting this information. Am I right, Centurion Jones?"

"They will wish for death," she said with a cold smile.

Nothing like the possibility of a prisoner to torture to keep a special forces team's morale up, Artex thought. "Get to work. If Tev is right, our opponent shouldn't be too hard to find."

Deck 7, USS Mallory Romulan Border 5 August 2573; Eagle +3 Days

Sevrin climbed down the small access ladder to the equipment bay nestled under Deck 7. Too small to warrant classification as a deck, the bay existed primarily to allow maintenance access to the primary sensor array and the tractor beam mount. A handful of other secondary systems were tucked away there as well, including one of the ship's log buoys. Sevrin paused to catch his breath at the bottom of the ladder, a wave of vertigo reminding him that he was not a well man. But he was also not

about to be stopped this close to his objective.

Making his way to the manual controls for the buoy, he connected his PADD and began downloading data. It took about 10 minutes to download the log files he had recovered from the main computer, along with his internal sensor analyses and any other assorted observations he thought would be useful to Star Fleet Command. While the data was being transferred he made his best effort to disconnect the security alert that would normally be generated. There was no way the enemy could remotely stop him from dropping the buoy, but it would be nice to have a few minutes to clear the area before a squad of Romulan soldiers arrived to kill him.

He set the buoy to use what power it had for a single burst transmission containing the name of the ship, the fact that it had been captured, and his own identification. Then he deleted that part as he'd be telling the Romulans who they were hunting for. He'd have to hope that Sixth Fleet believed the report. He had included the ship's location but deleted this to shorten the message; location would be easily determined by the stations receiving the message. The burst might well burn out the transmitter, but the key data would be given and the buoy might be found later and the full files recovered. In the event that the brief report did not burn out the transmitter, he told the buoy to drop to lower power and transmit the entire file over and over. He set a time delay before the probe would transmit, in order to give himself more time to leave the bay and hide somewhere else.

A soft chime from the PADD signaled that the buoy was loaded. Sevrin held his breath and hit the launch button. The sound of the buoy's departure filled the small room as the panel lit green, indicting a successful launch. A brief surge of relief broke through his emotional barriers. Disconnecting the PADD and checking the internal sensors, he saw no indication of enemies rushing to his location either; not only had he successfully completed his most important task, but he might even survive the experience.

Seeing no reason to loiter, he switched off his hand computer and was about to climb back up to the shuttle deck when something on the displays caught his attention. Frowning, he studied the controls more closely. At first glance all appeared well; green lights across the board. After a moment, he realized what was bothering him: the small screen showing the buoy's status showed it was transmitting in a code he was not familiar with. That made no sense. As a communications officer, he was familiar with every code, and had reprogrammed this buoy with new codes only a month ago.

Sevrin stared in disbelief. He had not thought to verify the buoy's code. It was not part of the launch procedure to do so; those codes were pre-loaded in advance. Why would a log buoy have a new code? He knew there was no way to change the code after launch. *What is going on? Did the Romulans change those codes? Have I failed?*

Fortunately, the discipline of logic stepped in before despair took over. As long as he was alive and uncaptured, there was still a chance to fulfill his duty, provided that he vacated the area before the Romulans' inevitable discovery of what he had done. Gathering his strength, he climbed back up the access ladder to Deck Seven and took the nearby stairway up to Deck 6.

There was another buoy located in the shuttle bay. Sevrin had avoided this option initially because the launch controls were in the shuttle bay control room, just aft of secondary phaser fire control. There were guards posted outside all of the phaser rooms, and the internal sensors showed quite a bit of activity in the shuttle bay itself. Taking a moment to compose himself, Sevrin stepped out of the stairwell and walked purposefully but unhurriedly towards the shuttle bay control room. Fortunately, the guard appeared completely disinterested in him and he entered the control room without incident. In retrospect, it had been a blessing that his uniform's former owner was a damage control techni-

cian; there would be legitimate reasons for a damage control tech to be just about anywhere on the ship.

Also in his favor was the fact that the control room was currently unoccupied. Conscious of the Romulans working in the shuttle bay below him, Sevrin casually set down his stolen tool kit and laid out a couple of wrenches as if he were about to start a repair job. Heading over to the buoy launch controls, he was surprised to find that this buoy had also been launched! There was a brief moment of hope when he wondered if Pell or someone in auxiliary control had actually managed to dump the logs and launch the buoy before *Mallory's* capture. Unfortunately, this would not have been any help, as it would hardly have included news of *Mallory's* capture, current location, or intended use.

Sevrin sat in one of the control chairs and stared at the controls in puzzlement. What now? After several minutes of frustration, Sevrin decided a new plan was in order. There was still one buoy remaining, the controls for which were in the forward section of Deck 5 with the probe launcher. If that buoy were also missing or unusable, he was either going to have to come up with some other way of contacting Star Fleet or go with the back-up plan of disabling the ship's engines. Even if he somehow pulled that off, it accomplished only half of his goal: whatever the Romulans were up to would be stopped, but the remainder of *Mallory's* crew would still be prisoners and more easily gathered up by advancing Romulans than retreating Star Fleet ships.

Deciding there was nothing for it but to see what awaited him upstairs, Sevrin gathered his tools. Before leaving, he looked out the windows of the control room, curious to see what the enemy was up to in the shuttle bay below. The activity was centered around a Romulan shuttle. Strangely, a human crewmember who he didn't recognize appeared to be directing the efforts of the Romulan workers. Sevrin slipped out his PADD as casually as possible and recorded a quick passive scan of the shuttle before heading out the control room's other exit and using the vertical shaft to float up to the deck above.

Medical Supply Locker, *USS Mallory* Romulan Border 6 August 2573; Eagle +4 Days

Doctor Cipes entered his supply closet and found a Romulan soldier waiting for him, working on a hand computer. Recovering from his initial shock, Cipes realized it was Lieutenant Sevrin. He wasn't sure what surprised him more: that the resourceful lieutenant had somehow stolen an enemy uniform or that he hadn't collapsed from radiation sickness in the process. Cipes took out his medical scanner and started examining Sevrin. Despite his best attempt at a poker face he winced a little at the readings — they were awful. "Sir, it's my responsibility as a physician to again suggest you surrender yourself for treatment. Your condition is worsening."

"Not an option," Sevrin replied. "I have not yet completed my responsibilities. My efforts with the log buoys were not successful. One of them was missing, the second was guarded, and the third ... did not function as expected. Do what you can for now; definitive treatment will have to wait until later."

"Yes, Sir," Cipes said, loading him up with a hypo full of antirads. "I had a visit from Chief Rubanza earlier today. She gave herself a nasty burn with a plasma torch just for an excuse to come in. The Romulan doctor was here, so we couldn't really talk, but she did slip me this while I was examining her." Cipes handed a data chip to Sevrin.

Sevrin loaded the chip in his PADD and scanned its contents. "I'm afraid that plan B has also hit some snags. Chief Rubanza reports that the Romulans have started watching her very closely. They must suspect that someone has been interfering with their attempts to unlock the main computer. I should have realized the chief would be their first suspect; it's a logical conclusion." Sevrin paused and read the data Rubanza had sent

more closely. "Is it possible for you to see the chief again without seeming suspicious?"

"Yes, Sir. In fact, I ordered her to come back within six hours. I told the Romulans I needed to verify that the synth-skin was setting properly."

"Good thinking," Sevrin said, typing orders onto the PADD. "Get her this message either verbally or by chip, whatever you think is safer. She is to lay low for now: do what the Romulans ask and don't do anything to arouse any further suspicion. I have reviewed the suggestions she has made and will attempt to conduct the modifications myself."

"You're going to disable the ship?" Cipes asked.

"I don't have the skills to effectively cripple the ship," Sevrin said. "And even if I did, I wouldn't be able to pull it off without access to Main Engineering. Chief Rubanza has a slightly different suggestion."

"Plan C," Cipes said, smiling.

"As you like. Be very careful when dealing with the Romulans. I believe they are even more dangerous than we originally suspected."

"How do you know that, Sir?"

Sevrin brought up a picture on his tablet and handed it to the doctor. "The Romulan shuttlecraft you see there is currently parked in our shuttle bay."

"So what?" the Doctor asked.

"What are they planning that would need their own shuttle?" Sevrin asked. "What can they do that would not be better done with one of ours?"

"So the Romulans used this shuttle to get on board?" Cipes asked, puzzled.

"I am not sure, but I suspect that this shuttle arrived later," Sevrin said. "This is a brand new shuttle, with the insignia of the Romulan special forces. I doubt it would have been on one of the older ships; they'd have had no reason to carry a special forces team. In any case, if they used a shuttle to send their people to *Mallory*, the naval commander would want his shuttle back before resuming his assigned war mission. Captains in combat are reluctant to give up assets for someone else's mission."

"Special forces... Oh my God, you think there's a Praetorian team aboard!"

"That is a logical conclusion," Sevrin said.

"This really changes things," Cipes said, looking visibly paler.

"No it doesn't," Sevrin said, taking his PADD back. "We're not going to Romulan space and a prison camp; we're going into Federation space on some kind of secret mission. It would be logical that their special forces would be part of that."

"I guess you're right," Doctor Cipes said.

"In any combat situation we assume the enemy is smart and dangerous; it would be reckless to think otherwise," Sevrin said. "This just reinforces the need for caution. Continue attending to your patients and be discreet in any dealings you have with the Romulans. I am going to lay the groundwork for Chief Rubanza's alternate plan."

"Yes, Sir," Cipes replied, as Sevrin climbed up a stack of supply crates towards the vent on the far wall. "Sir, if you don't mind me asking: How can you just calmly go back out there knowing what you're up against? Don't Vulcans feel fear?"

"Of course we do," Sevrin said. "We simply do not allow it to govern our choices. As for appearing calm ... it's the first thing they teach you in Command School: never let them see you sweat."

A trace of a smile reappeared on Cipes's face. "Well you're doing a good job of it, Sir."

Sevrin nodded and crawled out the airshaft, feeling upbeat for the first time in a while. The meds were taking the edge off the nausea and he was pleased with how he had handled the doctor, even though he had not been completely honest. Sevrin had never actually attended Command School, that was just something he'd

overheard Captain Sanchez say on occasion. He promised himself that he would file the request (if he survived) as he floated down the vertical shaft towards the engineering deck.

Conference Room, *USS Mallory* Romulan Border 7 August 2573; Eagle +5 Days

Lal sat with Tarus and his aide in the conference room, waiting for Artex and “Captain Doe” to return from another coordination meeting aboard the Federation police ship. The aide appeared uncomfortable with the silence, fiddling with his hand computer. Tarus was perfectly relaxed; for all appearances he might as well have been on a pleasure liner rather than a captured enemy ship. Artex arrived late and alone, tossing his own hand computer on the conference table with a clatter.

“Centurion Doe will not be joining us,” Artex said abruptly, “I have ordered him to remain in the other briefing room to meet with Commander Tarus afterwards for further remediation. The situation with the police captain is worsening. He is becoming increasingly suspicious and Doe’s ‘improvisations’ are not helping matters in the least.”

Tarus took this all in calmly. “There have been instances between our crews where we have apparently made minor errors in protocol,” Tarus said. “I had hoped our willingness to meet with the police captain on his home turf would be reassuring.”

“I thought so, too,” Artex said, “but if anything, it seemed to make him edgier. He keeps suggesting cooperative efforts that strike me as excuses to get more of his men aboard *Mallory* to snoop around. I ordered ‘Captain’ Doe to gently deflect these requests. When the police captain became more insistent, Doe told him it was a security precaution because we have reason to suspect that there is a Romulan saboteur aboard!”

“He’s not wrong,” Lal offered, earning her an angry glare from Artex.

“That is a course of action that Doe and I discussed,” Tarus admitted. “But I warned him not to go there unless he had no other option and not to do it without clearing it with you first, which I take it he did not.”

“He most certainly did not. The idea that a story like that would somehow *reduce* the Earthers’ suspicions is insane.”

“I disagree, but it’s a moot point now,” Tarus said. “I will deal with him after we are done here and I assure you I will not go lightly on him; he has to learn to operate within the boundaries we set for him. In the meantime, how bad is the damage?”

“They’re increasingly uncomfortable with our arrangement,” Artex said. “I don’t think they suspect anything close to the truth of what has happened, but I think they are beginning to question Doe’s legitimacy in command.”

“The idea that a captured ship has penetrated this far into Federation space is probably not the first or last thing that will cross their minds,” Lal said. “Part of me is surprised we’ve made it as far as we have.”

“True,” Tarus said, “but there are other scenarios that might occur to them which could be equally dangerous to us, such as mutiny or desertion.” Artex and Lal both looked surprised by this. “Don’t look so shocked, no empire has a monopoly on mutineers and cowards. Granted, it’s not common in any fleet, but I’m sure it’s happened in theirs.”

“I can’t think of anything else within our means to prove our legitimacy,” Artex said.

“Nor can I,” Tarus said. “So let’s try distraction instead. Our Federation friends were very eager to have us around when they thought that a War Eagle was going to decloak in front of them at any minute and blow them out of the sky. Let’s turn up the heat a little and keep them worried about external threats. I recommend we use one of the drop buoys to signal *Loyal Spirit’s* squadron and have them take a run at us.”

Artex frowned at that suggestion. The destroyer squadron

led by *Loyal Spirit* was listed as one of their nominal assets in the mission briefing. The squadron had orders to operate a relatively short distance behind them under cloak, the idea being that they could be called in to assist if all else failed and *Mallory* had to shoot her way out of a tight spot. “Thus far I have not been impressed by the cooperation we have received from the Navy on this operation,” Artex said. “What makes you think they will respond in a timely manner, or that they will behave as we wish them to and not do something stupid that makes matters worse?”

“Because the squadron commander is from my House,” Tarus said. “A real ‘up and comer’ too. Rest assured that she is much more politically reliable than others we have dealt with.”

Artex sat back in his seat with arms crossed, glaring at the SSA man. “This secret operation is even more important to House Pentalion than I thought, isn’t it? Why? What will a victory here buy you — a chance to take senate seats away from alliances led by the other houses?”

“This mission is important to House Pentalion because it is important to the Empire,” Tarus shot back. “That alone should suffice. But since you ask: yes, we believe a victory here and in several other ongoing operations will give us enough clout to displace some deeply entrenched incompetents from senate seats as well as important naval positions. That too is good for the Empire.”

“That remains to be seen,” Artex said, “but it is not my concern. You’re positive that they will respond and will perform as we request?”

Tarus nodded confidently.

“Very well. I’ll have Tev prepare one of the buoys for a silent drop. We’ll need to provide them explicit instructions as to how we want this to go.”

They worked on the details of a tactical plan for the better part of the next hour, until Artex was satisfied they had covered every variable they could. Tarus and his aide left to go deal with Doe; Artex sent the orders to Tev and headed back to the control room with Lal. They had barely made it out of the room before Tev signaled Artex, reporting that there was a problem with the buoy and requesting his presence on Deck 7.

“Our new tech specialist has an issue with communicators,” Artex said to Lal. “Come with me, let’s see how his hunt for real saboteurs is going.”

“Sir, I know you don’t want to hear this, but if Tev has important information, we should probably ask Commander Tarus to come along.”

“Correct on both counts,” Artex grumbled, and signaled Tarus on his communicator to meet them below.

They got as far as Deck 5 before they were interrupted again, this time by Li in the control room with a hail from the police ship’s executive officer. Artex sighed. “Doe promised the police captain that his executive officer and I would work together to schedule cooperative security improvements. I don’t have time for this.” Accepting the hail, Artex told the policeman that Captain Doe had changed his mind and wanted to attend to the matter personally. While he was working out the details for another meeting, he waved over a damage control technician who had just walked around the corner.

“Centurion, take this to Mister Doe in Briefing Room Two,” Artex ordered, hurriedly entering notes into his hand computer. “Instruct him to meet with the *Beckett’s* executive officer and to present the agenda I’ve sketched out here. He is not to schedule any joint operations until after our diversion and he is to stick to this plan without any further improvisations. And tell him that if he offers them any more gods-damned ice cream I am going to vaporize him!”

Artex thrust the tablet at the technician, who looked at him with a puzzled expression. Realizing that he was still speaking in Federation Standard, Artex took a deep breath and repeated himself in Rihannsu. The centurion gave a clumsy salute and headed

back the way he came.

Artex shook his head as he watched him go. "Bad enough that we are undermanned, but these are the sorriest excuses for soldiers I have ever seen."

Tarus was already waiting in the corridor outside the stairwell on Deck 7 and led them to the ladder that went down to the equipment bay below deck. Tev was in the bay, inspecting one of the consoles.

"Your tech specialist has something to show you," Tarus said. "Under the circumstances I think he was wise not to discuss it over the air."

"Is there a problem with the buoy?" Artex asked.

"In a matter of speaking. The buoy is missing," Tarus said.

"What do you mean it's missing? Tev, has there been a malfunction?"

"No, Sir," Tev called up from below. "I believe it was manually launched by whoever has been working against us. I think they were trying to warn the Earthers about us."

Artex tensed. "Did they get a message back to the Federation?"

"No, I don't think so," Tev said, climbing back out of the bay. "The buoy was manually launched, but fortunately whoever did it didn't anticipate that we had changed the codes. Whatever message they sent can only be read by the Romulan Empire."

Tarus made his choking laugh. "Humorously enough, this means the message may well be on its way back to us if it gets relayed to *Loyal Spirit* before the diversion operation."

"There is nothing the slightest bit humorous about this," Artex said angrily. "This could have blown the whole mission, not to mention getting us killed the instant we entered firing range of that battle station. Tev, I told you to keep a closer eye on that damned human engineer!"

"And I have done so, Sir," Tev replied. "I will tell you with complete confidence that it wasn't her. Nor do I believe it was any of the other captured engineers. None of the Earthers have been permitted below Deck 5. This is someone else's doing."

"This is a much more serious problem than we thought," Artex said. "Increase the guard on the forward half of Deck 5. I don't want anyone getting at the last buoy."

"At once, Sir," Lal said, getting out her communicator.

"That vulnerability will correct itself once we use the last buoy to contact *Loyal Spirit*," Tarus said. "Meanwhile, we need to find whoever is responsible for this."

"There are three possibilities. Artex said. "First, that one of our prisoners has figured out a way to get down here undetected. Mister Tev thinks this is unlikely, but he will investigate further, just to be sure." Tev nodded assent. "Second, that an enemy agent has infiltrated our ranks. Sub-Commander Tarus: I intend no offence, but the highly unusual nature of your team does lend itself to suspicion."

"None is taken," Tarus said calmly, "I would feel the same way in your shoes, but I assure you my people have been subjected to intense scrutiny prior to their induction. Their loyalty is beyond doubt."

"Very well," Artex said. "Needless to say I feel the same way about my team, but there are the Navy soldiers to consider. Centurion Lal, you will investigate this as thoroughly as possible with our current resources. We should have one of the SSA team working this angle too. Mister Li perhaps?"

"He would be a good choice," Tarus confirmed. "And I will detach my aide to assist as well."

"Very well. That leaves the third possibility: that there is another party at large on this ship. An escapee or one of the original crew or an operative from one of the Federation ships who has gotten aboard somehow. I think this is the most likely possibility. Tev, is there any way to access the ship's internal sensors and tell who is moving around in here?"

"No, Sir," Tev said. "We are still completely locked out of the

main computer system."

"In that case we'll form hunting parties and search the ship manually."

"If there is no hope of accessing the ship's internal sensors we should destroy them," Tarus said.

"I consider that a last resort," Artex said. "They could still be a great asset if Tev or Jones has a breakthrough with the computer. They should get back to work on that."

"A weapon carried but not mastered is a gift to one's enemy," Tarus quoted. "For all we know they are being used against us as we speak."

Artex scowled, sick of having officers' manuals quoted back at him by the odious SSA man. But he did have a point. "Fine. Tev, get teams moving to physically disable the scanners deck by deck. And while they're at it, have them deploy any portable scanners we have onboard at key intersections. Let's see if we can catch ourselves a rat."

"Tribune Artex, this is auxiliary control," came a call on the intercom.

"What is it?" Artex asked.

"The police ship says it has intercepted a transmission in a Romulan code from somewhere close behind us. He cannot get an accurate range without triangulation, but has sent a request to stations in the area for their bearing to the source."

"This is bad," Artex said to the others. "Either *Loyal Spirit* sent us a message our damaged systems could not hear, or there is a spy on board and that is his transmission from the missing log buoy."

"Certainly the latter," Sub-Commander Tarus said. "*Loyal Spirit* is aware that we have no functional long-range communications, as we have never broadcast a signal to so inform them. That means it could only be the missing log buoy."

"We could ask the police captain for a copy of the message," Lal suggested. "Surely, the computers of a frigate would have a better chance of breaking the code than police computers. Then we'd know what the spy had tried to tell his master. We might gain clues to his identity or his plans."

"Too risky," Artex said. "The police captain would start to wonder if we were trying to break the code or could already read it. We might be able to read it because Star Fleet isn't telling the police everything, which is probable, or he might even suspect that we were Romulans, not Earthers."

"It doesn't matter," Tarus said. "We can consider it confirmed we have a saboteur loose on board, and search for him all the more diligently. The transmission will also play into our hands when *Loyal Spirit* makes its attack."

"Good point," Artex said. "We'll proceed on that basis."

Deck 5, *USS Mallory*

Romulan Border 7 August 2573; Eagle +5 Days

"And tell him that if he offers them any more gods-damned ice cream I am going to vaporize him!"

The Romulan in the Star Fleet uniform thrust the tablet at Sevrin. Sevrin's mind raced, but he had no idea what the appropriate response should be. He stood there frozen by the shock of stumbling upon the enemy in a corridor that had looked clear on the internal sensors just a moment earlier. The Romulan's expression changed to one of exasperation, not unlike the look that Mister Pell used to get, and he began speaking in Rihannsu. Sevrin's grasp of the language was imperfect, but he gathered that he was repeating the same strange orders he had just given in Federation Standard. Not trusting himself to reply convincingly, Sevrin gave his best effort at the Romulan salute he had seen on the trivideos and headed back the way he had come, forcing himself to walk purposefully.

Once he was out of sight, Sevrin ducked into the nearby shaft, went quickly back to the familiarity of the medical supply

closet, and sat down to calm himself. Logic might dictate his choices in life, but it did not completely insulate the primitive parts of his brain from basic mammalian instincts. It took several minutes of mental discipline to calm the racing heartbeat his encounter had left him with. Sitting alone in the dark, a virtual prisoner on his own ship, Sevrin reconsidered the nonchalance he had shown towards the Praetorians in his earlier conversation here with Doctor Cipes. Even in a non-combat situation there had been something frightening about them, a quiet lethality lurking behind their eyes that made Sevrin realize that their notoriety was completely earned. He was going to have to be much more careful if he wanted to stay alive long enough to warn Star Fleet what they were up to.

This line of thought brought him back to the unexpected boon sitting in his lap. This seemed as good a place as any to hole up and examine its contents; he was due to check in with Doctor Cipes in an hour for more meds. Powering up the hand computer the Romulan had given him, Sevrin started combing through its contents, looking for insights as to what the enemy was up to.

Forty-five minutes later, Cipes came in and gave him another once-over with his medical scanner. He looked like he was going to give Sevrin another lecture about the gravity of his injuries, until he got a close look at the computer Sevrin was working on.

"Sir, that language...", Cipes said, staring at the tablet, "is that Romulan?"

"Rihannsu," Sevrin corrected absently, still paging through data.

"Okay, Rihannsu," Cipes said, still staring. "Where is that from?"

"From one of the Praetorians. I think he might have been their leader. There's not as much information here as I was hoping, but some of it is quite useful." He looked up. "Did you know that *Mallory* has joined a Federation convoy?"

Cipes was still fixated on the tablet. "Sir, if you don't mind me asking, how did you get your hands on their leader's computer?"

"He gave it to me," Sevrin said.

"Fine, don't tell me," Cipes said, laughing. "But if we survive this, promise me you'll let me buy you a drink and get the real story out of you, Sir!"

"That would be ... agreeable," Sevrin said, feeling lost. "Did you know about the convoy?" he asked again, trying to regain a handle on the conversation.

"No, Sir," Cipes said, "but I haven't had contact with any of the Romulans except their medical tech and he's not chatty. None of the crew mentioned it, so I assume they don't know either."

"I should have been more thorough when I was in the astronomy lab," Sevrin said, his attention returning to the tablet. "I was only interested in getting a fix on our position; it never occurred to me to search for other nearby vessels."

"I'm sure it's not the first thing anyone would have thought to check," Cipes said. "Why would they take the risk of joining a convoy in a captured ship?"

"I don't know," Sevrin said. "Maybe they're using it as cover to penetrate deeper into Federation space. He switched to his own PADD and accessed the library computer. "The convoy described here has been making regular runs between Battle Station R-6 and the colony on Theron's World. Assuming the border stations have been destroyed by now, the logical thing to do would be to retreat to the interior, just as I'm sure the surviving ships of the Sixth Fleet are doing." He thought for a moment more and put down the PADD. "I should have thought of this sooner. We're going to Battle Station R-1."

"With the civilians as cover, they could get close enough to sneak aboard and capture the station!" Cipes said.

Sevrin frowned. "I don't think even a Praetorian team could capture an entire battle station, but I do think you're right about

using the convoy to get close enough to somehow cripple the station. There must be a squadron of cloaked ships nearby, ready to capitalize on the special forces mission. With the Orions having seceded and the Sixth Fleet in tatters, the loss of R-1 would be devastating."

"My God, Sir, if that happens they'll chase us halfway back to Earth before we can regroup. We've got to stop them."

"Agreed," Sevrin said, picking up the Romulan tablet again. "If I'm reading this right, one of the other ships is a police vessel. If we could get a signal to them, we could sound the alarm. Do you have access to a communicator?"

"No, Sir. The Romulans confiscated them all. They were very thorough. In fact they were as careful about accounting for all the communicators as they were with the phasers."

"I had one where I was injured and trapped," Sevrin said. "They didn't track it down, but it was broken."

"I'm not an expert in those things," Doctor Cipes said, "but maybe they weren't worried about communicators that didn't respond as functional. That guy whose uniform you stole didn't have one?"

"No. Now that I think about it, none of the regular soldiers I've seen seem to have one, just the Praetorians. Everyone else seems to be using the intercom system instead. I wonder why they're being so restrictive?"

"Security perhaps," Cipes said. "With Federation ships nearby, maybe they're worried about one of the prisoners grabbing one."

"That's fine for the guards, but it seems like an unnecessary hindrance for the soldiers working in other areas of the ship." Sevrin thought a moment longer and then let the thought go; after all, security was not his specialty. "They must be worried that the convoy would hear a careless conversation in Romulan. In any case, it opens up a new option for us, a way to solve the problem. If I can get at *Mallory's* main short-range transmitter, I should be able to hail the convoy."

"I thought you said that communications were offline due to battle damage," Cipes said.

"Long-range ones," Sevrin said. "Short-range still works, but I didn't know anyone friendly was nearby. The Romulans could be using the secondary transmitter array. The primary was damaged during the battle and is incapable of long-range communication. Since it's offline, they don't have guards assigned to it. But from what I see in the computer, the primary array could be made capable of limited short-range communications if I had access to make some hasty repairs."

"We need a diversion," Cipes said.

"According to these notes, the Romulans are planning some kind of diversion quite soon," Sevrin said. "If I can piece together what it is we might be able to..."

Sevrin cut off as the Red Alert siren started whooping through the ship. Recovering from his surprise, he said, "Perhaps this is their planned distraction."

"Or it could be a real attack, Sir!" Cipes said.

"Either way, it will keep them busy for a while," Sevrin said, running towards the vent. "Get to your station, I'm heading for the transmitter!"

Auxiliary Control, *USS Mallory* Romulan Border 7 August 2573; Eagle +5 Days

"The three bogies are all K-hull destroyers. Sensors identify Hostile One as a leader variant and Hostile Two as a scout. Hostile Three reads as a standard K5R," Lal reported.

"*Loyal Spirit*, *Ranger*, and *Nemesis*," Tarus said. "But keep them listed as unknown hostiles in the system; we don't want it going over the datalink to *Beckett*."

"Increase speed to Warp 2.1," Doe ordered. "Set an intercept course directly for the lead vessel. Charge phasers and load

the working photon tube. Signal *Beckett* to form up on our right flank and match course and speed. Tell the rest of the convoy to follow at best speed. Get me *Beckett's* skipper on the line as soon as he's available."

Taurus exchanged glances with Artex. Doe had been trained for some kind of captured ship mission by "commanding" Federation ships in the Imperial Fleet's combat simulators, but not even Taurus had seen him actually fight a starship before. That the human had fallen instantly into the rhythm of ship combat was every bit as startling as it was impressive, even if "Captain" Doe were just doing what the pre-arranged "battle" plan called for him to do.

Artex watched the teams in the control room come alive with the anticipation of battle. Even knowing that this was a pre-planned engagement, he felt the tingle of adrenaline. And even though the attack was bogus, the stakes were just as high as they would be in an actual combat encounter. It was make-or-break time with the Federation police cutter and the rest of the convoy; their cover and quite possibly the fate of the whole mission was riding on the outcome. Artex wished he had more than a basic understanding of ship combat tactics; as it was all he could do was sit at his station and do his best to hide his misgivings from the rest of his team.

Doe, of course, appeared to suffer no such difficulties. Sitting in the command chair with his chin resting thoughtfully in one hand he radiated confidence. As annoying as he was, he was certainly a consummate actor. He looked just like one of the indomitable Federation captains in the Earthers' trivideos. That was good for the mission, but the more Artex watched him, the more it ate at him. Doe was so convincing that it was easy to forget he wasn't the real thing: another swaggering human seated on his plush throne, lording over his crew of Vulcan serfs. The image made Artex instinctively want to find a blade and gut him where he sat.

"Hostile Three is turning to starboard and accelerating," Lal reported. "It looks like she's trying to swing around our flank and make a battle pass at the freighters. The other two hostiles are on an intercept course, range 400 thousand kilometers and closing fast."

"Just as we planned," Tarus said.

"Maintain course and speed," Doe ordered. "Make preparations for a snap acceleration to Warp 2.6. Get a weasel ready and advise *Beckett* they should do the same. Use any leftover power to overload the photon."

"Captain Simmons is hailing us," Li reported.

"Put him on screen," Doe said. The tactical display slid to the left half of the viewscreen as a view of *Beckett's* bridge came into focus on the right.

"Captain, this is a very aggressive posture you're taking for someone who seemed very intent on avoiding combat with the Romulans a few days ago," Simmons said.

"I'm afraid we have no choice. They seem to have gotten the drop on us, good and proper," Doe drawled, ignoring the policeman's barb. "We can't outrun them and if we scatter the convoy, they'll just chase us off and run down the freighters one by one. My plan is to come in slow at first, make it seem like we're circling the wagons. That will suit them fine; they'll think they can just keep throwing plasma at us from medium range until they wear us down. We'll use a sudden acceleration to close to point-blank range with the leader, hit him hard with overloads, and force him to withdraw. With any luck, the rest of the squadron will go with him. If not, they're still going to have a hard time outshooting a whole convoy with just one destroyer and a scout."

Simmons nodded thoughtfully. "One of the destroyers has already broken formation, that will make it easier for us to isolate the leader. Your ship is already damaged; a close engagement sounds very risky, especially if you go in first."

"I won't have it any other way," Doe said. "We may be shot

up a bit but we can still take more hits than your ship. Besides, according to all the after-action reports, the Romulans are gunning for fleet units, so this whole battle may be more about destroying *Mallory* than it is about the convoy. As long as we're going to be the primary target anyway, I'd rather go down swinging for the farthest fence."

"I understand," Simmons said, looking at Doe with what appeared to be genuine respect. "I'm overloading our photon now; we'll be ready to accelerate when you give the signal. Good hunting, Captain. *Beckett's* got your back!"

Idiot, Artex thought, but he was relieved to see Doe sticking to the script for a change. He glanced over at Tarus and saw a similar expression.

"Range to Hostile One is now 300 thousand kilometers and closing," Lal reported. "Hostile Three looks like he is lining up for a battle pass on the *Samantha*."

"Very well," Doe said. "Steady on course. Prepare to accelerate on my mark."

"Aye, Sir," Smith said from the helm.

"The primary communication array is back online," Li reported. "It's showing as green for short-range communications on my board."

"I ordered no such repairs," Artex said. "Tev?"

"No, Sir, I have no teams working on that system," Tev said. "Li, are you sure it's not a glitch?"

"I don't think so," Li said, frowning. "I've checked it twice and the system remains green. In fact, it's powering up. I don't seem to be able to..."

"Tev, cut power to that transmitter immediately!" Artex ordered.

Tev hit a switch repeatedly, finally slamming his hand on the console in frustration. "No effect, it's on local override. Sir, we must start jamming with the other transmitter: broad spectrum, full power. I am needed below!" With that he charged out of the control room.

"Tev! Gods damn it!" Artex shouted after him. He looked over at Li, who was waiting expectantly and made a snap decision. "Do it! And get a combat team down to the location of that transmitter!"

"Hostile One now 250 thousand kilometers," Lal said.

Doe looked over at Artex questioningly.

"Stick with the plan," Artex said. He walked over to the communications panel and watched anxiously as Li raced to power up the jamming. Reaching over Li, he switched on the outgoing communications monitor.

Static howled from the overhead speakers, then suddenly resolved into a voice speaking in Federation Standard.

"Attention all friendly vessels in range. This is an emergency message from Lieu..." The message cut off suddenly with a squeal of noise.

"Jamming enabled," Li said with palpable relief.

"Range to Target One now 200 thousand kilometers," Lal said.

"Signal *Beckett* to accelerate in 15 seconds," Doe ordered, shouting over the noise blaring from the speakers.

"Fluctuations in the signal frequency," Li reported. "He's trying to get around the jamming!"

"Order that combat team to get a move on!" Artex ordered. "And find out where the hell Tev went and send a team to back him up too."

Sparks flew from Li's console and the noise overhead cut out abruptly as a large portion of the communications panel went dark. "I've lost outgoing communications ability," Li said.

"Range to Hostile One now 150 thousand kilometers," Lal said.

"Punch it!" Doe ordered

Mallory surged forward, followed half a second later by *Beckett*. Artex grabbed the back of the command chair to steady

himself as they hurtled towards the Romulan ships.

"Heavy jamming coming from the scout," Lal reported as her display was suddenly swamped with electronic garbage. "It looks like *Beckett* is using some reserve power to try and burn through some of it."

Excellent, Artex thought, he's committed to the attack.

"Weapons, stand by," Doe ordered. "Hold fire until 20 thousand kilometers. Helm, hold course and overrun the target."

"Aye, Sir," Lal said. "Range to target now 80 thousand."

"Plasma launch! Two torpedoes in the air from *Loyal Spirit*, headed straight for *Beckett*."

Artex held his breath as the range closed.

"Range now 40 thousand. Sir, *Beckett* is firing!" A lone photon torpedo streaked past their bow and smashed into the forward shield of the *Loyal Spirit*, followed by phaser fire. Artex couldn't believe the policeman got a hit at that range through all the jamming; in the Earther's trivedios Federation photons never hit anything.

"Torpedoes now 30 thousand kilometers from *Beckett*. She is decelerating rapidly and has shut down her active fire control signals. Weasel is out!"

As they watched, a distraction shuttlecraft left *Beckett's* bay and a mirror image replaced her trace on the tactical display. The plasma torpedoes streaked towards the shuttle and winked off the display anti-climactically moments later as the pseudo-plasmas impacted the weasel harmlessly. Phaser fire from the *Loyal Spirit* blew *Beckett's* shuttle apart and her ghost image began fading from the tactical display.

"Range to Hostile One now 20 thousand!" Lal said.

"Weapons, fire phasers and torpedo!"

"On the way!"

Lal hit a stud on her panel and sent another photon torpedo hurtling towards the *Loyal Spirit*, missing by a narrow margin. Their phasers were equally wide off the mark, scoring glancing hits on the destroyer, which barely penetrated her reinforced forward shield.

"Very good," Artex said to Lal. "That looked like a convincing miss."

"It wasn't hard with all that jamming, boss," Lal replied. "I don't know how sensor techs see anything through this soup."

"Damage assessment on *Loyal Spirit*?" Doe asked.

"She's putting on an excellent show for the Feds," Lal said.

"Power systems are going offline all across the ship to simulate substantial damage. She's venting plasma from her engines and is trailing physical debris."

Dumping the debris was a nice touch, Artex thought. Let's hope it's good enough to sell the civilians.

Beckett's ghost image continued to fade off the screen as the effects of her destroyed weasel waned. At the moment it faded completely, *Loyal Spirit* put two more torpedoes in space and turned to rake the police cutter with her aft phasers. Not needing her special sensors anymore, *Ranger* also turned and pounded *Beckett* with all five of her phasers. The small ship reeled from the punishment as the torpedoes continued inexorably towards her to deliver the final blow.

"Mister Li, is the line-of-sight communications gear still functional?" Doe asked. The line-of-sight gear used a modulated laser to establish a voice and data channel between two ships at short range. It was supposed to be an emergency backup to rescue a crippled ship, but also allowed for private conversations as it required a direct path.

"Aye, Sir, ready to go."

"Smith, overrun and join up with the *Loyal Spirit*," Doe ordered. "Li, fire up the line-of-sight communications gear and exchange as much data as you can."

"Aye, Sir," Li said. "Sir, I'm receiving an emergency distress call from *Beckett*. They're requesting immediate beam out of all surviving crew."

Artex looked over at Tarus. "Your team has disabled the automated catastrophic damage responses?" Artex asked.

Tarus nodded. "As we discussed, the system has been re-configured to accommodate our exit strategy. Fortunately this was completed before the problems with our uninvited guest began." There was a sudden gleam in his eye. "But I have an idea. If I may have manual control over the emergency transporter?"

Artex frowned, but nodded his assent and ordered the shield facing *Beckett* dropped. As he watched, Tarus locked the transporters on the *Beckett* and energized. Artex hoped the SSA man knew what he was doing; they had neither time nor space to deal with any additional hostages. Seconds later the two plasmas slammed into the police cutter's bow. There was a series of secondary explosions until the cutter's warp chamber breached and she blew apart.

"Now in communication," Li reported. "Data is coming in from the *Loyal Spirit*."

"Make sure you kill that link before there's any chance of the freighters detecting it," Artex said. Even if they could not hear the conversation, there was no reason for a conversation to be happening. "Lal, what's the status of *Nemesis*?"

"She made a run at the *Samantha*," Lal said. Damage to the freighter was extensive, but she took some hits from the other freighters. She's on course to link back up with the rest of the squadron."

"*Loyal Spirit* confirms through line-of-sight communications that the squadron will now withdraw," Li said. A few moments later the three Romulan ships activated their cloaks, which would also play well with the surviving civilians in the convoy.

"Well done, everyone," Artex said. "Doe, once communications are restored, get on the line with the civilians. Make them maintain battle alert for at least two more hours; we want to keep them good and scared. Also see to the damaged freighter. If they need to evacuate crew they had best expedite, but send any survivors to another freighter; don't bring them here. I want us back on course to the battle station forthwith. Meanwhile, I'm going to go find Centurion Tev."

He found Tev one deck below, sitting on the floor next to an open maintenance panel. Severed power conduits dangled out of the open panel. Two technicians were busily working to repair the conduits while a medic worked on Tev's arm, which was sporting nasty electrical burns all the way up his bicep. His ceremonial shortsword lay on the deck under the cabling.

"I will hear your report now, Centurion," Artex said. "When I saw you running out with your hand on your sword I had hoped you were going to kill the intruder, not attack a wiring closet. Is there a particular reason you preferred to use your blade over another tool, say a phaser? Other than a flair for drama?"

Tev flushed and tried unsuccessfully to brush off the medic still fussing over his forearm. "Sir, it was imperative to stop that outgoing signal. These power relays were closer than the transmitter itself and I reasoned that clean cuts would be easier to repair later than slugging them with a phaser."

"Logical, if a tad reckless," Artex said. "But my real problem is with your decision to run off on your own to attend to this. We are going to have a long talk about this when you are recovered."

Tev stiffened. "I stand by my actions as consistent with the best needs of the Empire in the situation..."

Artex raised a hand to silence him. "Tev, this is not a reprimand. Your actions in this case were quite correct. You probably just saved the mission; don't think I don't realize that. But you are part of a team, and the team must act as one. Individual initiative is all well and good, but you must trust that sometimes your teammates will have a better solution."

"I understand, Sir," Tev said.

"Good," Artex said. "When you are done here, check up on the teams installing the sensors. I'm going to send out another

wave of hunting parties to find our intruder.”

“At once, Sir.”

Artex reached down and picked Tev’s sword off the deck and handed it back to him. “You should also check with your House armsman and see if they have any swords with insulated handles. Don’t go getting yourself killed just when I’m starting to like you.”

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“Thus far I do not believe the Romulans are aware I am at liberty, although I presume my activities will eventually arouse their suspicions. I will continue to observe their actions and make additional reports if the opportunity presents itself. Although I have insufficient data to reach a conclusion about their intentions, I believe they pose a significant threat. A summary of the tactical data I have collected so far is in the attached documents...”

“Behold, the face of the enemy,” Tarus said to the assembled staff in the briefing room as he paused the playback. Sevrin’s face stared back at them on the monitors. The recording had been part of the data sent by the *Loyal Spirit* during the battle. The Vulcan had apparently recorded this message and loaded it and *Mallory’s* logs into one of the modified log buoys, which had dutifully transmitted it back to Romulan forces.

“I know this man...” Artex said, staring intently at the monitor. There was silence in the room as the rest of the team waited expectantly, but Artex ignored them.

After a few moments Lal finally asked, “Who the hell is he? He’s not one of the senior officers. An engineer?”

“No, not an engineer,” Tarus replied. “We have already accounted for all the engineers. We don’t know exactly who he is, and since we’re still locked out of the personnel files in the main computer, it’s going to take time. I have two of my men going through the crew quarters looking at photographs and personal effects. I’m thinking he’s a junior officer in one of the technical divisions: communications, computers, or maybe damage control...”

“I saw him!” Artex suddenly exclaimed, slamming his hand down on the conference table. “Six or eight hours ago, just before the battle! He’s stolen one of our uniforms: he was dressed as a damage control technician. For gods’ sake, we spoke with him!”

“The centurion in the hallway?” Lal asked. “The one that you...”

“Yes, that one,” Artex interrupted, his expression warning her to drop it. *The one to whom I gave my portable computer. If we survive this escapade, I am never going to live that down.*

“This has serious implications,” Tarus said, noticing the interchange between Artex and Lal but choosing to ignore it for the moment. “For starters, we didn’t bring a cache of uniforms on board with us. A missing uniform means a missing man, and we have not received any reports of missing crew. This is intolerable sloppiness.”

“Intolerable perhaps, but not exactly surprising,” Artex said sourly. “We’ve been hampered from the beginning by the lot of third-raters that squadron commander saddled us with. Obviously the problem is worse than we thought. Lal, you and Smith will round up our team leaders, do a roll-call of our troops, such as they are, and get to the bottom of this. Tev, how are we doing with the sensors?”

“Internal sensors have been physically disabled on Decks 1 through 4 and most of Deck 5,” Tev reported. “I’d like to move faster but we’re so short on hands that I have to periodically pull teams off the detail for higher priority work. Also, I will be sending teams of no less than three to the lower decks to minimize the chances of booby traps or ambush.”

“What about the deployment of our own sensors?” Artex

asked. He leaned back from the console.

“As per your orders, I have deployed all of the portable sensors we have available, primarily in conduits to and from the lower decks where our enemy is most likely hiding. So far there have been no results. If I may speak frankly, Sir, I don’t think this strategy is going to work. We don’t have enough of our own sensors to provide comprehensive coverage. And even if we did, a passive sensor web is no substitute for a live hunting party.”

“We’ve tried that,” Artex said. “Twice, if memory serves, with an equal lack of success. Do you have some new ideas for our hunting parties to try?”

“No, Sir, I don’t know why we haven’t caught him in our sweeps. I can only suggest that, like many hunts, persistence is required for success.”

“You’re both wrong,” Tarus said flatly. Shrugging in response to the venomous look Artex gave him he continued, “Forgive my bluntness, Tribune, but as you have both stated, hunting him with scanners isn’t working. We need to try a different approach.”

“I await your wisdom,” Artex said acidly.

“Our enemy is not content to lurk in the shadows; he walks openly amongst us. Plus he is a Vulcan, one of our distant brothers, and therefore more dangerous than a common Earther. Perhaps a uniform is not all he has stolen from his victim or victims. Perhaps he has been stealing secrets from their minds as well.”

“A telepath?” Artex asked. “What evidence leads you to this assumption?”

“Just my instincts. Since it is a common ability amongst their people, we must consider the possibility.” He looked reflectively back at the monitor. “Such is the price we pay for our passions. There are less than a thousand men in the Emperor’s service with similar talents; can you imagine what we could accomplish if psionics remained as common among Romulans as it is among Vulcans? But I digress. My point is that our opponent appears to be a man of action. Instead of chasing blindly after him, we should be trying to draw him into the open where we can deal with him properly.”

“You want to set a trap?” Lal asked.

“With the proper bait. We know he’s been monitoring our actions; let’s give him an irresistible target. By now he must know that there was transporter activity just before *Beckett* was destroyed. We’ll leak the information that a substantial number of her crew were evacuated to this ship and are being held prisoner somewhere that we have already knocked out the internal sensors; let’s say the wardroom on Deck 3. Since we are so short-handed, the security is light enough that a rescue attempt will seem possible.”

“This sounds like a difficult story to swallow,” Artex said. “That’s hardly an ideal location to detain prisoners. Why wouldn’t we use a larger space like the mess hall? And why would we guard it lightly?”

“All easily handled with the appropriate counter-information,” Tarus said. “His actions have made us cautious, so we are confining our operations to a smaller area of the ship near the control room. There are few soldiers guarding the prisoners because of unrest with the other prisoners, plus we are preparing a large hunting party to scour the lower decks. The trick is not so much to make the details perfect as it is to make them something he will *want* to believe and to provide a credible source.”

“And what do you propose as a credible source?” Artex asked.

“The mind of one of our soldiers, of course. We brief all the soldiers with these details. Then we ignore Centurion Tev’s sound advice and start sending individual soldiers — from the fleet, not our own teams — to physically disable the internal sensors and whatever other errands he wouldn’t want us doing. I have used this strategy before against Vulcan operatives in the past with great success.”

“I don’t like it,” Artex said. “It’s a passive strategy that sur-

renders initiative to the enemy. We don't know if he'll take the bait or not and even if he does there's no telling how he will act on it."

"If anyone else has ideas on a better plan, now is the time," Tarus said, glancing around the room. There was a long silence, after which he looked pointedly back at Artex.

"Fine," Artex said. "I still don't like it, but I have to admit that what we've tried so far hasn't been working. How long will you need to set it up?"

"A couple hours should suffice," Tarus said. "Also, I'll need those portable sensors redeployed to cover the target area."

"Very well. Tev, coordinate the redeployment of the sensors and provide whatever other assistance the sub-commander requires. Centurion Lal, you will remain for a moment. Everyone else is dismissed."

Once the room was empty except for himself and his executive officer, Julian rested his head in both hands and rubbed his temples wearily. "Rav, you may speak freely. I need your advice."

Lal raised her eyebrows in surprise. One of the things that made their friendship work was the barrier of professional conduct they observed when on a mission. It was very unusual for Julian to drop the formality in the middle of an operation. "Okay, Julian. How can I help?" she asked.

"I'm contemplating the assassination of an SSA officer and I need you to talk me out of it."

Ravenna smiled. "And here I thought you two were finally starting to get along. Sorry, Sir, but we're pretty shorthanded as it is, especially with renegade Vulcans on the loose mugging our techs. My advice is to try harder. Also, I know you don't like to play politics, but it wouldn't be the worst thing to come out of this with a well-connected friend."

"Friend!" Julian snorted. "A man like that has no friends, just playthings. Little pawns he pushes around the board to suit his purposes. He can quote as many officers' manuals as he wants but that man is *not* a warrior. Words like honor have no meaning to him. Look how casually he spends the lives of those under his command."

"Well, I admit I wouldn't want to be one of the walking targets he's sending down to the lower decks to be mind-raped," Lal said. "But just because he's not a true warrior doesn't mean he doesn't have his uses." She looked serious for a moment. "He's a weapon. An ugly weapon, perhaps, but a dangerous one. The Empire has need of many weapons to destroy her enemies. Some bring home honor; others just bring back bodies. But so long as he brings victory for the Empire, he's okay in my book."

Artex looked up at Lal reflectively. From another officer, her words might have sounded insincere, or even corny. But he knew Ravenna Lal was cut from a different cloth. Growing up orphaned and impoverished, she would have lived a short, violent life in a gang if a corrections officer had not seen some potential in her and sponsored her for Praetor's Youth program. The Empire was her mother and her father, and he knew better than to question her sincerity when she spoke of it. Her passion and impulsive nature also made her an ideal second in command, balancing his own tendency towards caution.

"Fair enough," Artex said. "And your thoughts on his trap?"

"I'm not so sure it's going to work, but I think it's worth trying," she said. "Even if he doesn't take the bait, his reaction might be helpful."

"True. It might give us some insight on where he's hiding."

"Exactly. Then, once you know where he is, you can bring him more supplies besides hand computers. Food, blankets, ammunition, perhaps some of your mother's cookies..."

"Ugh, stop before I have myself shot," Julian said miserably. "And don't look so smug: I don't intend be standing alone before the firing squad. You were right there next to me and I don't recall you detecting anything amiss."

"I was distracted by his rugged good looks."

"Really?"

"Gods, no. That man looks as rugged as a pastry chef."

Julian looked up at Sevrin's face still staring at them on the monitor. "Careful, Rav, don't be fooled by appearances. Remember what your friend Tarus said: he's one of our 'distant brothers.'"

"I have never understood this fascination some people have with the Vulcans," Ravenna said. "Between Surak's drivel and a century of living under the Earthers' thumbs Vulcan society has been all but castrated. The Empire represents the best of our kind now; all that's left on that rock is a sorry lot of plant-eating, pacifist weaklings that serve the Federation with science fairs and chess tournaments."

"I don't know about that," Artex said. "I've fought Vulcans before and I haven't found them to be any more or less inherently dangerous than any other species."

"I'll prove it to you," Lal said, leaning conspiratorially across the table. "When we complete this mission and return to the Empire bathed in glory, you'll have your pick of assignments. You'll get us assigned to do reconnaissance on the first Vulcan colony in the invasion corridor and once we're there we'll find the largest tavern..."

"Assuming Vulcans have such things as taverns..."

"All colonies have such things," Lal said dismissively. "We'll find the largest tavern and we'll find a group of the biggest, ugliest, meanest-looking Vulcans on the planet. And we'll cuss their mothers and piss in their drinks until the whole joint comes down on us. And mark my words, for every one of us that goes down, we'll take six of them with us. What do you think?"

"I think I see why you relate to Sub-Commander Tarus. You're both crazy."

"So you're not coming?"

"Oh, I didn't say that," Artex said, smiling for the first time in a long while, "In fact, I can't think of a better way to kill an afternoon..."

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"The maintenance crawlway should suffice to get me in," Sevrin said, "But it's not a practical escape route. Assuming we are successful, I'll lead *Beckett's* survivors down the starboard vertical shaft to Deck 5. He highlighted an area on his PADD, which was currently displaying *Mallory's* deck plans.

Doctor Cipes, sitting across from him on the floor of his supply closet leaned in to look closer. "Where are you headed: the transporter room?" he asked.

"No, the functional transporters are all guarded," Sevrin said. "We'll move forward to the adjoining shaft, and from there to the turbolift repair shop. I'll have one of our explosive charges waiting there." He looked up at the doctor. "My compliments on your suggestion about ammonium nitrate. It was surprisingly easy to get the replicators to refine a batch from the ship's stores of organic waste."

Cipes smiled wryly. "Trust me, Sir, if you had grown up where I grew up, you'd know a lot about fertilizer too. It's very handy for starships to be able to do things like that to support small colonies. I was surprised we had training materials about bomb-building in the library computer."

"The actual intent of the training was to detect and defuse improvised explosive devices, not how to construct them, but it was sufficiently instructive," Sevrin said, returning his attention to the deck plans. "We'll move port via the lift tubes and use the charge to breach the aft bulkhead of the security section. If we can access the small arms locker there, we should have enough manpower and firepower to make a counterattack feasible."

Doctor Cipes grunted. There had not been time during the final battle to pass out weapons to the crew, so at least some of

the small arms lockers had weapons. With the main computer locked down, the Romulans had been unable to open them without resorting to plasma cutters, which would trigger explosives and destroy the weapons. Anyway, the Romulans had brought plenty of their own weapons. Sevrin just had to hope that the Romulans had not gotten around to welding steel bars over the unopened arms lockers.

Cipes was flush with excitement. "That's great, Sir! Where will we hit them, auxiliary control?"

"Engineering, I would think," Sevrin said. We'll want to secure as many critical systems as quickly as possible. And it opens up the possibility of liberating more of *Mallory's* crew to assist. But I'll make that call later; there are many variables in flux and we may need to react to a fluid situation." Privately, Sevrin was hoping to find an officer with more tactical experience amongst *Beckett's* crew to whom he could transfer command of the operation. He had found a lot of courage inside himself, but he was no commando.

"Take these and conceal them somewhere handy," Sevrin said, handing the doctor a stolen Romulan sidearm and a tricorder. "Once you hear the attack underway, get down to Deck 5 as fast as you can. Switch on the tricorder as you go. It should make you temporarily undetectable to their scanners, but use caution all the same."

Cipes chuckled to himself as he looked over the tricorder, long past the point of asking from where Sevrin kept pulling these little miracles. "How will I know when the attack is underway?" he asked instead.

"Trust me, Doctor, you'll know..."

Auxiliary Control, *USS Mallory* Romulan Border 8 August 2573; Eagle +6 Days

"Contact," Li said as an enemy icon appeared on his overhead display. "Intruder is moving up the port access shaft toward the recreation room."

All eyes in auxiliary control were fixed, not on the main display, but on the damage control station that was being used to monitor the trap. A red Federation symbol had just appeared on Deck 3, growing larger to indicate vertical movement.

"Strange," Tarus said, looking over Li's shoulder. "I expected him to attempt entry via a less obvious route. It's naïve of him to think that we aren't guarding both shafts."

"Perhaps he has something else in mind," Artex said.

"He could go up to Deck 2, switch shafts and approach the wardroom from above," Tarus mused. "But I don't see how that improves his odds any."

"Report from Team Three in the recreation room," Li said. "They see movement in the shaft and are moving in to investi..."

His report was cut off as a thunderous boom reverberated through the deck. Li tore off his earpiece as it squealed with electronic feedback. The alert klaxon began blaring as dry chemical smoke flooded the compartment.

"We're under attack! Secure the compartment!" Smith cried and the soldiers guarding the entrance moved to comply.

"Stand down," Artex ordered, choking from the chemical fog pouring in. "Nobody is attacking us here. Tev, have engineering disable the fire suppression system throughout the ship. Li, re-establish contact with Team Three. Find out what the hell happened up there."

"Incoming reports are confusing," Li reported a few moments later, still gagging. "Team Three appears to have been neutralized. Team One reports that whoever came up that shaft detonated a powerful explosive device."

"Let's assume our opponent is not a suicide bomber," Artex said, "and that he detonated the device remotely. Get Team Two in the wardroom on the line and have them..."

"Priority message from Team Two," Li interrupted. "They re-

port they are under attack and have men down. They are requesting reinforcements. Should I have Team One move in and engage?"

"Gods, no!" Artex said. "We have an intruder on the loose with a stolen uniform who doesn't show up on scanners. He's probably already got them shooting at each other; let's not throw any more fuel on the fire! Order Team One to form a perimeter around the section comprising the wardroom. Stun anyone who approaches whether they look friendly or not; we'll sort it out afterwards." And then, noticing that he was not choking on smoke anymore he said, "Tev, have you got the fire control systems deactivated shipwide?"

"Negative," Tev reported, "Engineering reports they are still locked out of the parts of the main computer controlling secondary environmental systems. I have technicians moving from deck to deck manually shutting the system down."

"Update from Team Two," Li reported. "Hostile has broken contact and is fleeing, presumably towards the lower decks. They are pursuing."

Looking up disgustedly from the chaos on the displays, Artex took a moment to savor one bright spot: watching Tarus's smug composure become increasingly flustered as his clever plan degenerated into a fiasco.

"When the ship explodes and we defect to the Orion Pirates," Artex muttered, "we must remember to take this man with us."

"I don't understand," Tarus said, scowling at the monitor. "We were expecting him to either ignore the bait or to attack the wardroom. What was the point of bombing the recreation room?"

"It was probably a diversion," Lal said.

"A diversion?" Tarus sputtered. "He could have killed everyone on the deck, including the hostages he thought were there! I can think of a dozen better ways to get our attention."

Lal shrugged. "I didn't say it was a *good* diversion. Remember, we are dealing with an amateur. Still, I've seen worse efforts." There was a trace of a smile as she looked over at Artex. "Remember when we were backing up Velius's team at the embassy crisis on Perusia?"

Artex winced. "Don't remind me. Eighty percent hostage



casualties thanks to his 'diversion.' He's lucky they don't decimate Praetorian teams anymore." He looked pointedly at Tarus. "Or SSA teams."

"Your point is taken. You were right; this was an unfortunate idea," Tarus said irritably.

"Don't be so hard on yourself, Sub-Commander," Artex said. "This *was* a bad idea, but that doesn't mean we come away from it empty-handed. Our little exercise has given us some insight into how our enemy thinks and that has to have value, wouldn't you agree?"

"I would, assuming you have a practical application for it," Tarus said, bristling at Julian's condescending tone.

"In fact, I do. Centurion Li, replay the telemetry from the wardroom. Turn on the icons for each of the life form sensors we deployed."

The action unfolded before them as before with the addition of a dozen icons showing the locations of the sensors Tarus's teams had deployed throughout the deck. When it reached the point where the Federation blip showed up on the scanners, Artex said "Pause here. We have a bomb that looks to our scanners like a Vulcan. This was clever, but not overly difficult to pull off, am I right, Tev?"

"Yes, Sir," Tev said. "All you would have to do is attach a device that broadcasts a fake life sign reading. A medical tricorder would work well, but I can think of a number of other easily scavenged devices that would suffice."

"All right Li, continue the playback but disable all filtering. I want to see the raw feed."

Li flipped a switch and the portable sensors immediately blurred into multiple icons stacked on top of each other.

"Why are there multiple listings for each sensor?" Tarus asked.

"It's normal artifact," Li said. "Those sensors are probably set in ventilation shafts or maintenance crawlways or other places where the signals bounce around and return duplicate contacts. By default the sensor ignores these ghost images, so with the filters off it's normal to..." Li cut off as one of the sensor images suddenly detached from the wall and moved quickly towards a friendly soldier's icon. "Um... that's not normal."

"It's him, isn't it?" Tarus said. "It's the same trick as he used with the bomb."

"Basically," Artex said. "He's masking his own bio-signature by broadcasting the same signals as the scanners, making them think he's just another node in the sensor web." As they watched, the soldier's icon changed from blue to gray. "With his stolen uniform and the mayhem that the fire suppression system is causing, he gets close enough for a silent takedown, probably a nerve pinch..." They watched as the sensor icon closed in on another soldier which also grayed out, but not as quickly as the first. "He tries the same trick again, but the second soldier is more alert and sounds the alarm..." The icons played out the rest of the battle, two more Romulan soldiers falling to what appeared to be friendly fire, before the sensor icon moved over the starboard vertical shaft and shrank off the screen. "And now we see the practical application. Centurion Tev, do you see the flaw in his play?"

"He is avoiding detection by impersonating a sensor node..." Tev thought aloud, looking pensive until the implication suddenly hit him. "It's an active emission!" His face hardened into a dangerous, predatory expression. "Give me two men, Sir."

"You'll take Lal and a full squad," Artex ordered. "They've probably chased him back down to the lower decks by now so start at Deck 7 and work your way up. One of you should be scanning for Vulcan signatures and the other passively scanning for emissions. Stay alert! He's had plenty of time to make preparations, so don't wander in to any stupid traps."

"So there is a silver lining to this after all," Tarus said. "I've never had the opportunity to interrogate a Vulcan before..."

"A disappointment you will continue to live with," Artex cut in. "Let me be perfectly clear: I want this matter settled. We are too close to our objective to take any more risks or waste any more time. Find him and kill him!"

Lower Decks, *USS Mallory*

Romulan Border 8 August 2573; Eagle +6 Days

Sevrin dove into the vertical shaft, canceling his horizontal momentum by crashing into the opposite wall of the shaft and kicking down hard. Hasty maneuvers were always regretted later in zero-g but there was nothing for it; a split second later a shot from a plasma rifle seared through the space he had just vacated, blasting straight through the bulkhead. He curled into a protective ball, literally bouncing off the walls as he careened down the shaft. Slamming into the bottom of the shaft, he kicked off the aft bulkhead into the horizontal shaft that connected the two vertical shafts bisecting the ship. Reaching the forward shaft he pivoted and uncoiled like a spring, pushing off the port wall of the shaft to soar through the entrance to the turbolift repair bay. He was upside down and off balance when he translated back into the ship's artificial gravity field, slamming so hard to the deck that for a moment he believed his head might actually have burst. He rolled over and coughed up a gout of blood; lances of pain stabbing up his left flank. *I believe I have fractured several thoracic vertebrae*, he thought absently as the corridor blurred out of focus, longing for nothing so much as to give himself over to the darkness.

The sounds of pursuit galvanized him into action as the Romulans made their way through the shaft after him. He crawled over to an open maintenance panel and threw the switch on the bypass he had jury-rigged as part of his earlier preparations. There was a whine of protesting conduits as unregulated power was shunted into the environmental systems of the vertical shaft. A crate of spare parts next to him exploded – a hasty shot from the soldier who was now floating in the shaft across from him. Sevrin grabbed at his phaser, but he knew he'd never make it in time; there was a cold smile on the soldier's face as he adjusted his aim for the killing shot.

The shot never came; his enemy suddenly whisked away as the gravity generators in the shaft surged to life. A half-second later came panicked screams as the rest of the Romulan squad rocketed past, impelled by over five gravities of force from the overloaded generators. Their combined mass crashed into Deck 7 with a wet crunch, followed by silence.

Sevrin sagged against the bulkhead. Despair was, like all emotions, illogical and a wasteful indulgence. Yet he found it difficult to focus on anything other than the completeness of his failure. *The doctor was correct to fear the Praetorians*, he thought. *Besides outnumbering us, they have completely outmaneuvered me. Against such odds what logical reason would there be to expect any outcome other than failure? It was arrogant of me to think otherwise.*

Doctor Cipes entered the compartment at a run, his stolen Romulan sidearm out, eyes wild with adrenaline. "Mr. Sevrin!" he exclaimed, "God, I thought for a moment there you might have blown yourself up. When that contraption of yours went off, it felt like the ship was going to tear in half!" He paused, frowning with confusion as he realized they were alone. "Where's the crew from *Beckett*? Didn't any of them make it out?"

"There was no one in the mess hall," Sevrin said wearily, "other than the Romulans, of course, who were waiting there to kill me. It was a trap."

"I don't understand, Sir," Cipes said. "If they aren't in the mess hall, where are they?"

"Dead, most likely," Sevrin said. "The Romulans probably simulated the transport. Or they simply beamed them off the cutter into open space. In the middle of battle it would have looked

much the same to sensors.”

The young doctor stared crestfallen for a moment, then walked over to look carefully down the vertical shaft. “I see your trick with the gravity systems worked.” He looked expectantly at Sevrin, waiting for orders. “Sir, we have to get out of here. I don’t think anyone saw me on the way down, but it’s just a matter of time until they figure out where we went. Where should we go next?”

“I am open to suggestions,” Sevrin replied, closing his eyes and gripping his side as the pain from his broken ribs flared.

“Plan A is a wash, time for plan B.”

“There is no plan B. The Romulans prevented anyone in Engineering from doing anything that would immobilize the ship.”

“Plan B is a wash, time for plan C,” Cipes said insistently.

Sevrin opened his eyes and stared at him. “With everything that has happened, what makes you so confident I have a ‘plan C’ prepared?”

Cipes smiled. “I just knew you would, Sir.” The confidence in the young man’s eyes was palpable, contagious. Sevrin did not feel absolved of his failures, but he felt the correctness of his actions.

Not arrogance, merely duty.

Sevrin nodded wearily. “You are quite correct, Doctor, time is of the essence.” He took a step forward and almost collapsed with pain. “I will require your assistance.”

Cipes swung an arm under Sevrin’s shoulders to support him. “Where to, Sir?”

“The starboard battery room. Take the lift tube aft to the first junction.”

With the turbolift system offline, the lift tubes would probably not be the first place the Romulans would be looking for them, and with good reason: requiring little maintenance, the tubes themselves were not designed with an abundance of safety features. Navigating vertical intersections was hazardous under normal conditions, never mind when you were supporting your half-dead commanding officer. Fortunately they had less than half the deck to traverse and made decent time.

The entrance to the battery room was right around the corner from the lift exit, directly across from the smashed remains of what had once been the emergency bridge. To an outside observer the battery room would not have looked to be in much better condition: thick cables dangled from holes in the ceiling and the walls were charred black from what must have been a raging fire. Rubanza’s engineers had been efficient in their repairs, restoring the ship’s reserve power to 97% of capacity while unknowingly laying the groundwork to support the modifications Sevrin had completed later. Using a cargo mover as a crutch, Sevrin made his way to the now-familiar controls on the far side of the compartment. He gave Cipes his hand phaser and told him to fuse the compartment doors closed.

“Finished,” Cipes said moments later, “but it won’t hold them long once they find us. None of these doorways are reinforced.”

“No matter,” Sevrin said, busily working at the console. “This will not take long and after we are done it won’t matter. Open the power relays on that panel; start at the second bank from the top and work your way down.”

Glad for something to do, Cipes hurriedly started opening connections. Status lights went from amber to green across the panel as he worked. “These relays connect to the main engines?” he asked.

“No,” Sevrin replied without looking up from his work, “they go to the *impulse* engines. The Romulans were very suspicious about any work involving the warp drive. It was easier for the chief to sneak some modifications into her repairs to the secondary power systems: specifically, replacing the standard power conduits from the impulse engines with a bi-directional, high-capacitance link. All that remains is for me to disable the circuit breakers and safety controls.”

“So this is similar to what you did to the gravity systems back in the shaft,” Cipes said.

“That is essentially correct, albeit a tremendous understatement.” Sevrin watched the last lights go green and lifted the safety cover off the final switch. “It’s ready.”

“And this is going to immobilize the ship?” Cipes asked.

“In a matter of speaking,” Sevrin replied dryly. He hesitated with his hand over the switch and finally turned to Cipes. “Doctor, I do not believe you understand the implications of the information I have given you. When I close this connection it will completely discharge the ship’s batteries, dumping approximately 5.817 megawatts of energy directly into the impulse drive. According to Rubanza, this should be sufficient to detonate the reactor piles.”

Cipes looked puzzled for a second, then his eyes widened. “Oh my God! Lieutenant Sevrin, you’re not going to immobilize *Mallory*, you’re going to blow her up!”

Sevrin nodded silently.

“You’re sure... this is the only way, Sir?”

“I do not see any other course of action. If the Romulans succeed in destroying Battle Station R-1 before our ships have a chance to regroup, they could conceivably outflank and destroy the whole of the Sixth Fleet. I cannot allow that to happen. I was serious about accepting suggestions if you feel I have overlooked any viable options.”

The panicked expression on the doctor’s face slowly gave way to resigned determination. “No, Sir, I’m afraid I don’t have any,” he said quietly.

Sevrin nodded. “If it is any consolation, I dictated an extensive report and locked it in a stasis canister, one that the scientists use for biological samples. That is in the drone magazine. That compartment is armored and might survive the explosion. It’s not just designed to allow the blast of an exploding drone to vent outboard, but to be completely torn out of the ship by any serious internal explosion. My last entry recorded the invaluable service of yourself and Chief Rubanza and recommended you both for combat decorations. With luck, your nephew and the Chief’s son will get billets in Star Fleet Academy — if they want them.”

“I know, Sir.” Shrugging under Sevrin’s questioning gaze he added, “Rubanza told me; she read the copy we tried to transmit during the battle. We appended an entry ourselves. We told them they should give you the Silver Star.”

Sevrin was quiet for a moment, and then said “Thank you, Doctor. Although he would not have admitted it, I think my father would have been proud.”

Remembering the Terran custom, he offered the doctor his hand. Like most species with significant telepathic potential, Vulcans usually avoided unnecessary physical contact. But in the warmth of a handshake Sevrin felt a genuine sense of camaraderie for the first time since joining the service and the two men enjoyed a moment of quiet mutual respect.

And then he threw the switch and blew them all to hell.

***USS Potemkin*, Flagship, 3rd Division, 6th Fleet Romulan Border 5 August 2573; Eagle + 9 Days**

The recording was no different than it was the four previous times that Fleet Captain Yefimov had listened to it.

“...I repeat: this is Commander Sanchez of the *USS Mallory*. We are under attack by two BattleHawk-class Romulan ships and are falling back under heavy fire...”

The picture dissolved into a storm of static, the raucous sounds of battle replaced by a harsh electronic squeal, then silence. “*Mallory’s* a fast ship,” Yefimov mused. “Even facing two ships he might have been able to break contact.”

“If they were damaged and there were still enemy ships in the area, they might be running silent,” Trelar said. “Is that what

you think happened?"

"I don't know," Yefimov said. *We may never know*, he thought. "But I do know this: we can't afford to have *Kashmir* delay any longer waiting. Inform Captain Svenson he is to proceed to Battle Station R-1 to link up with the rest of the division forthwith. List *Mallory* as missing in action, presumed destroyed."

Activity in the conference room was still as the assembled officers took a moment of silence to pay their respects to their comrades on *Mallory* and then they went about their business of fighting for the living.

Romulan Shuttlecraft AER007

Federation Space 10 August 2573; Eagle + 8 Days

Artex said nothing as Tarus entered the shuttle's cockpit and sat in the navigator's seat. The SSA man waited patiently for a few minutes, then finally said, "Tribune, you are relieved."

Artex shot him a dangerous look, but the SSA man continued calmly, "Your status as commanding officer is not in question. I am simply here to take the next watch."

"That is unnecessary," Artex said, returning his attention to the controls.

"Regulations and common sense say otherwise," Tarus said firmly. "At your insistence, you have held the watch for the past two and a half shifts. We are deep in enemy space and still some distance from our rendezvous. You may remain in the cockpit if you wish, but for the safety of our teams I must insist on taking the next shift. If it's any help, I know how you feel..."

"You know nothing about me," Artex said coldly. He logged off his panel but remained in the pilot's seat, with his arms crossed, brooding angrily at the viewscreen.

"I have led men and women in the service of the Empire for decades," Tarus said, "and known both success and failure. I think I am well accustomed to the taste of both, but I didn't come up here to pick a fight about that. I'm working on the report I will submit, assuming we return home safely. I thought it would be useful for us to compare our notes about the mission to be sure our reports are... accurate."

Artex snorted. "Oh really? And what will your report say about the outcome of our mission?"

"The truth, of course," Tarus said. "That despite the many challenges placed before us by the poor cooperation we received from other agencies, we overcame significant obstacles and were just shy of the target when Centurion Doe became irrational and blew our cover. The Federation inserted a team of special forces on board the ship and sabotaged the engines. After that, Marines beamed aboard and large-scale fighting broke out. Unable to secure the ship due to the insufficient manpower we were provided with, we destroyed the *Mallory* to avoid her recapture by the enemy. Fortunately we had completed work on our exit strategy by this time and everyone with a communicator was beamed to the escape shuttle when the catastrophic damage routines were triggered."

"That's quite a story."

"It's more believable than the one where two elite special operations teams allowed some third-rate technician to get the drop on them," Tarus said.

"Perhaps, but so is the story where a Praetorian team's efforts are compromised by the incompetence and insubordination of the state security team they are saddled with," Artex said. "Isn't that what you're really worried about?"

Tarus smiled. "The thought had crossed my mind, but I don't think you're the type to blame another for what you perceive as your own failures."

"How I deal with my own failures is my own concern," Artex snapped.

"As you wish," Tarus said. "But before you waste any more hours excoriating yourself, you ought to take a step back and consider our mission outcome objectively. This was an extremely

challenging operation with a very low success probability. You came within a stone's throw of reaching your objective and along the way you gathered some extremely valuable intelligence about the enemy and, if our luck holds, will return two very valuable assets to the Empire. The only cost was an enemy ship due for the scrapyards. Your pride was the only real loss here."

"And the missing man, in case you've forgotten," Artex said. "Quite a coincidence that Centurion Doe's communicator was apparently set incorrectly for the beam out."

"I have not forgotten," Tarus said. "Doe was notoriously insubordinate and incompetent; no doubt he ignored the careful instructions he was given."

"Just like that..." Artex said, shaking his head at the complete lack of remorse. "Do you know what the difference between our two organizations is, Sub-Commander? If the Praetorian Preditrate asked me the fate of a man who did not return home, they would expect me to tell them that I looked him in the eye when I took whatever actions I thought were necessary."

"No, Pente-Tribune. The difference between our two organizations is that no one in the SSA would ever ask such a ridiculous question," Tarus said calmly.

There was an icy silence, broken only when Artex rose out of the pilot's seat and stretched his cramped muscles. "You don't need to be worried about my report," he finally said. "It will read as yours does. I will be as honest in praising the good work that your team did as I will in listing their shortcomings."

"That is all I ask," Tarus said. "My report will likewise speak well of your team, and say that you are an underutilized asset at your current rank. Despite your obvious dislike of me, I enjoyed working with you and your team. They serve the Empire well. It's going to be a long war, Pente-Tribune. I would not object to working with your team again and all of us who survive will be promoted, perhaps more than once. You're one successful mission from sub-commander and a Praetorian group command."

"For duty, all things," Artex muttered as he headed back to the crew compartment and a long nap.



THE WARRIOR RETURNS

"What is your problem, Little Warrior?" the Leopard King asked his house pet.

"Stop calling me that," Ketrick snarled back.

"But that is what you called me when I was in your dimension and much smaller than you," the Leopard King pointed out.

"Go away," Ketrick said. "Leave me to suffer."

"Your suffering is a concern to me," the Leopard King said. "Are you not happy here? You're safe, and have plenty of food and a good place to sleep. I have procured books and trivideo disks in your language. Why are you not happy?"

"I am a warrior," Ketrick said. "I want to return to my ship and fight in the war."

"That war ended a few days ago," the Leopard King said. "Your side did not lose, but did not win. Everything is back as it was before the war. A new war is likely to break out any time now against a new enemy. You cannot go home. It is too dangerous."

"I will take my chances," Ketrick said. "Send me home."

"I cannot risk you being killed," the Leopard King said. "You are too special to me. Whatever else you want, I can provide. Would you like me to bring you a female of your kind?"

"No," Ketrick said. "I want my freedom. I want to be somewhere that I can be a man, not a house pet. Responsible for my own survival, my own success."

"Is there nothing I can do to make you happy here?" the Leopard King asked. "If there is, you have only to name it. I can bring others of your kind here, even arrange for you to have a ... simulator ship where you can re-fight all of your battles."

"No," Ketrick said. "I can never be happy while I am a pet. I need to be on my own, to find my own happiness."

"Very well," the Leopard King said. "I shall arrange it."

Ketrick awoke with a start, realizing that he was outside, in the open air. More to the point, he was in a forest clearing, with a blue sky overhead. He could hear the noises of the wind, and of animals. He found quantities of packaged food, a small folded tent, hiking and camping equipment, a hatchet, a good knife, fire-starting equipment, and more, all of it of Klingon manufacture.

"A good start," Ketrick said aloud to himself. "Let's see what it takes to get home." He sorted through the piles of equipment, which was far more than he could possibly carry. The clearing was sheltered and there was no better place to work from. He found a stream of clear water only two dozen meters away. "Let's do a recon," he said to himself, then laughed. *If I'm here alone, I'm going to go crazy talking to myself.* He spent an hour looking around, and found no sign of higher life forms. It was a pleasant forest clearing in a valley. The temperature and air pressure were about right for him, but he had noted a bundle of warm winter clothing in the pile. "Very well," he said, eating something from one of the food packs. "Set up camp, then hike half a day in each direction, returning here each night. That's a start."

He set to work with the hatchet building a tripod and suspending the food well off the ground. He built a platform at knee height and spread out the bedding on it, then pitched the tent over it and stopped to eat again, this time warming the food over a fire he had built. Judging from the sun, he had arrived in the morning and it was now a good 10 hours later. (No timepiece was in the provided gear. There were no electronics at all.)

Three days later, he was convinced of two things. One was that there was no one anywhere near him, nor had anyone set foot in this valley in some time. The other was that there was *someone* on this planet, as he had seen contrails in the sky twice.

"Obviously," Ketrick thought aloud, "that cat expected me to spend my entire life in this camp. A cat would, I guess. But I know there are people, and people means contact off world, and that means a way home. I am going home." He felt good about that.

"Plan one," he said to himself, "walk downstream until I find

people or an ocean. Plan two, climb a mountain and look around." He studied the amount of equipment and supplies present, easily 10 times what he could possibly carry. Unless he abandoned most of it, any plan to move would involve multiple trips, half a day down stream with all he could carry, build a cache, then return to camp each night. It could take weeks to reach anything. "Better to climb the mountain," he decided, saying it out loud to see if he sounded as confident as he felt. "If I see nothing, I can still go downstream, but going downstream leaves the mountains behind. The mountain it is."

Selecting his equipment and supplies carefully, he planned for a three-day hike: one day to reach the mountain he had selected, another to climb it, and a third to return to his base camp. He packed his gear and got a good night's sleep, then ate a warm breakfast (including a fish his trap had caught in the stream), and set off. He even took a moment to leave behind a written message (carved in a tree) saying who he was and when he would return. "Increase your odds," he remembered his instructor in survival training teaching him. "It takes but a few minutes to leave a message, even if you're certain no one will find it."

On the afternoon of the third day (the mountain was farther and larger than he had estimated) he stood on the summit, easily two thousand meters higher than his camp, and looked around. "He could have left me a pair of field glasses," Ketrick muttered, knowing that the Leopard King had excluded anything that would have encouraged travel. He sat on the top of the mountain all of that afternoon, spent the night under rain clouds in a small tarp, and resumed his scan of the horizon the next morning. There was no ocean in sight, although there seemed to be a large lake downstream from his camp. He saw more contrails overhead. But what he did *not* see were roads, smoke, or anything that a higher life form might have constructed. He found a few nuts and roots to eat. He stayed on top of the mountain all of the second day, hoping that the second night would be clear.

And there it was, a light, in the far distance. Using a selection of stones and sticks he had assembled for the purpose, he carefully built not one, but three piles, each of which was perfectly aligned on the light. He finally slept, having scanned in every direction for more lights and having found none.

The next morning, he consulted the piles of sticks and stones and determined that the light had come from the side of a mountain many kilometers in the distance, far from his planned downstream path. In fact, he would have to climb the mountains on the far side of his valley to reach it. Given the experience of the last four days, he would be walking for a full tendar.

"Return to camp," he said aloud to himself, planning the steps. "Gather up all of the food I can carry, hike as far in that direction as I can, return to camp, sleep, get equipment and the tent, eat as much as I can, cache the rest, and head for the light."

Five days later, Ketrick awoke at the bottom of a cliff. Some large predator was only a few dozen meters away, ambling toward him. "I must have fallen," he said to himself. Pulling his knife out, he tried to reach for the hatchet with his left hand only to find that his arm was clearly broken by the fall. "Not good," he said to himself. The predator, some kind of furry thing with a lot of teeth, had stopped five meters away and was sniffing the air.

"Not familiar, am I?" Ketrick asked the beast. With his left arm broken, fighting would be hard. Thinking back to his survival training, decades before, he hit upon an idea. "Most animals don't like humanoids," his instructor had said. "They think we're dangerous, because we are. Try yelling before you fight." Ketrick decided that it could not hurt anything to try that; he could always fight if the beast came closer.

"Go away!" Ketrick screamed at the top of his lungs, swinging the knife wildly. "Leave me alone!" he roared. The predator, nonplussed by all of the noise, settled back on his haunches to observe Ketrick further. "Get out of here!" Ketrick yelled again.

The predator calmly turned about and ambled away, in no

particular hurry.

Ketrick took stock of things. His pack was still on his back, and his legs did not seem broken. Ketrick pulled out a spare shirt, found some sticks, and managed to splint his arm, but the broken bones were exposed and infection was going to be a problem very quickly. His plans changed from reconning the light to just walking up and asking for help. Checking his bearings, Ketrick set off to climb the facing mountain. Reaching the top of it two days later, he scanned for any sign of habitation. Nothing.

"Very well," Ketrick said, settling in for an afternoon of rest. He managed to build a fire and heat some rations. His pack was half-empty now, but he still had three days of full rations left, and he was, by any measure, well over halfway to the light. With nothing else to do, he gathered firewood and, as dark fell, he built up his fire as large as he dared. "They see me, or they don't." Then he walked a hundred meters to the side, to a place he had selected and supplied with sticks and stones, and waited until his eyes adjusted. "There," he said, spotting a light, not that far from the expected direction. He assembled a pile of stones and a carefully placed stick to mark the direction, then scanned for more lights. He spotted two, both much farther away.

The next morning, Ketrick poked at the coals of his fire until some flame appeared, and threw some leftover wood on it. The fire warmed him and his breakfast. Walking back to his observation spot, he carefully noted the direction to the light, now only ten kilometers away, and took careful note of where he could cross the intervening stream.

It was at that stream that he met them.

They were humanoids of some kind, although Ketrick was unsure what species. They seemed cautious but friendly, even if they could not understand a word he said, nor they him. There were four of them, and one of them carried what was clearly a pistol of some type. Another had some kind of electronic device, perhaps a scanner or maybe a communicator. Two of the men had bows and arrows, and all of them had knives of some sort.

Ketrick pointed to his injured arm, more to show he was less of a threat than to ask for help. One of the humanoids, apparently male and perhaps the leader, sent a young ... girl? ... running away down the stream. Ketrick assumed that a message was being sent, perhaps to get help. But for whom?

The leader motioned for Ketrick to follow him. One of the other men offered to carry Ketrick's pack. Ketrick relented at that, giving over the backpack with some relief. He'd been carrying it for many days. He had, however, mostly given it up to show that he was friendly and not a threat. Either they were helping him or taking him prisoner; either had the same probability of getting him home — or at least medical care. Of course, if he were in some other galaxy, or some other dimension, there was no home to get to, but he would deal with that when he had to.

Soon the group reached what was obviously a well-worn trail, and in another two hours of steep climbing, they reached a cabin of some sort. An older female was there, and she offered him a tray with a piece of bread, a piece of fruit or maybe a vegetable, and a cup of some kind of drink. Ketrick suspected that this was some kind of formal welcoming ritual, and made some gestures and motions that he hoped they would take as friendly. The woman smiled at this, and Ketrick hoped that a smile meant the same to these people as it did to his own.

They showed him to a chair built (locally?) out of wood and he ate the offered food. One of the men pulled up another such chair and pulled out his knife, but obviously not as a threat. He offered the hilt of the knife to Ketrick, and gestured toward Ketrick's knife. *Either it's a trick to disarm me*, Ketrick thought, *or he just wants to have the only kind of conversation we can have*. Ketrick handed over his knife, hilt first, and took the offered knife. It seemed to be good high-grade steel, obviously with some chromium in the alloy so it did not rust. The man looked over Ketrick's knife and then offered it in return, and Ketrick traded knives again.

The other man, the leader, came and sat down with some kind of electronic device, and was pushing buttons and looking at the screen. After a few minutes, the man seemed to find what he was looking for, and sat back for a minute to think.

Then he looked at Ketrick and said "Klingon" in badly accented and half-garbled Klingon. Ketrick's heart raced. If the man had an electronic device that (apparently) had some kind of encyclopedia and had found a picture of a Klingon, then Ketrick was at least in his own galaxy and his own dimension.

"Yes," Ketrick said, then realized that the man could not understand him. Ketrick tried nodding, assuming that this would mean the same thing to him. The man nodded back, then spoke another word that half-sounded like the Klingon word for "Rigelian" or maybe something else.

Ketrick nodded again, his mind racing. *If he's a Rigelian*, Ketrick thought, *I must be on some colony in the Federation. That cat said the war was over, so getting home should be covered by some kind of peace treaty. Even if I'm on my way to a prison, there will be other Klingons there.*

The man continued punching buttons on the device, occasionally trying another word of Klingon. It took over an hour, but Ketrick thought he had conveyed the idea that he was warrior caste and a military officer, and that he had understood the man to be a civilian colonist who lived as a hunter.

The noise of a shuttle startled Ketrick and ended the conversation. Ketrick rose and followed the man to the clearing where the shuttle had landed. The door opened and three humanoids stepped out, two carrying rifles of some sort and the third wearing a pistol and some kind of badge on his shirt. They were all dressed alike so Ketrick assumed them to be police or military.

The man with the badge had some kind of electronic device and spoke into it. Words of stilted and clipped Klingon came out of the device. "Are you a Klingon?"

"Yes," Ketrick said. The machine said some word.

"How did you get here?" the device asked.

"My ship was destroyed," Ketrick answered. "I escaped the explosion. I landed here some time ago. I explored and saw the light. Then, I walked here."

"Are you alone?" the device asked.

"Yes," Ketrick said. "I have been alone since the explosion."

"Will you come with us?" the device asked, and the man with the badge motioned toward the shuttle. Ketrick nodded, handed his knife to his host as a token of thanks, and climbed into the shuttle along with the guards and the lawman.

The flight was only a few minutes, and the shuttle landed in what was, clearly, a larger settlement with a mix of buildings. Some were built out of logs, others of some kind of bricks, but one of them was clearly a modern structure brought to the planet as part of a colony. It seemed to be some years old. It was into this building that Ketrick was led. The two armed guards followed. Ketrick was shown to a small room with a table and some chairs.

"This is obviously a police interrogation room," Ketrick said. "I assume you can understand me. I accept that I am your prisoner, but I understand that the war is over. I want to go home to my empire. I don't want to make any trouble."

There was no answer. Someone came in and offered Ketrick more food and several beverages, of which Ketrick selected one. The man showed Ketrick that a small door in the room led to a washroom. A woman was waiting when Ketrick left the washroom. She had what seemed to be medical instruments. She did a scan of his arm, and left, returning with a printed piece of plasfilm. On it were some Klingon words.

Your arm broken. One bone, forearm.

Do you want us to repair the bone?

Yes. No.

Are you in pain? Do you want medication for pain?

Yes. No.

Ketrick indicated that he would accept medical treatment for

the broken bone, but did not want any painkillers. The pain was not that bad, having subsided to a gnawing ache, and he was not comfortable with the idea of being injected with something.

The woman said something, and gestured him to sit down. Another man came into the room, and she directed him to hold Ketrick's upper arm firmly in position. She pulled on the wrist with one hand, using the other to manipulate the broken bones back together, then relaxed the tension. Ketrick felt waves of pain wash over him, and regretted turning down the painkillers, but the pain subsided again once the bones were back in place. She waved one of the devices over the arm for several minutes, and then scanned the arm with a different device. She smiled and left the room, then returned with another piece of plasfilm.

The bone is in place, and regrowth was started.

It will get stronger over time. The infection will end.

Avoid using the arm strongly for several days.

Are you in pain? Do you want medication for pain?

Yes. No.

Ketrick again indicated that he had no need for painkillers. The woman packed up her equipment, but handed him some tablets in a small packet, pointing to the words medication for pain on the plasfilm. Then she left.

Ketrick found the whole episode intriguing. *If the policeman who collected me had a translator, why didn't this woman use one?* He finally decided that, perhaps on a small colony world, there would not have been need (or budget?) for more than one translator. It was something to figure out later. Obviously, the woman was some kind of doctor or medic, and apparently her hospital computer had the ability to print written text for alien languages. *Might be a standard feature of the system, Ketrick thought, a way to handle emergency cases.*

Someone else came into the room a few minutes later and handed him several sheets of plasfilm. They turned out to be 30-odd pages of Klingon and he realized that they were a children's story about a great king who had to select the best husband for his only daughter. Reading (he had seen nothing to read in 10 days or more) he felt that these were in fact actual pages of a Klingon book, not a translation of a Federation book. Apparently, they were concerned that he would be bored.

Ketrick found himself intrigued by the story and was somehow happy that the king had selected the suitor Ketrick felt was best for the girl. He found the whole idea of being handed such a story, let alone enjoying it, somewhat surreal.

Later, someone brought in a cot, blankets, and more food.

The next day, a pair of new humans came into the room. *Earthers*, Ketrick thought to himself. One of them was holding an electronic device that translated his words into Klingon and Ketrick's words into some other language.

"You are a Klingon military man?" the first man asked.

"Yes," Ketrick said.

"How did you get here?" the first man asked.

"My ship was destroyed," Ketrick answered. "I escaped. I landed here. I explored and saw a light. I walked toward it for many days and was found by a group of people who took me to their home. They were most kind to me, offering me food and drink. Then a shuttle came and brought me here. The ... policeman who brought me here was very professional, as was the doctor. I was not mistreated in any way by any of your people."

"What is your name? And your rank?" the second man asked.

"Ketrick, Targis Ketrick," he answered. "I am a captain of Marines." That much was the truth. Ketrick was concerned that to mention he was *also* a commodore of the Deep Space Fleet might subject him to a more serious interrogation.

"Did you arrive alone?" the first man asked.

"Yes," Ketrick said. "There are no other Klingons or Subject Race people on your planet, not that I am aware of. If the war is indeed over, can I be sent home soon?"

"Soon enough," the second man said.

"Did you commit any act of violence, espionage, or sabotage while on this planet?" the first man asked.

"No, I did not, other than catching a fish," Ketrick replied. It suddenly dawned on him that he was being scanned by a truth detector. *Good thing I have not had to lie.*

The questioning went on for over an hour. Ketrick refused to give the name of his ship, and the second man said to the first "It is his right to withhold that information."

The Federation is run by idiots, Ketrick thought to himself. Whatever. I want to go home. I want to walk the deck of a ship. I want to fight and win and one day become an admiral. Whatever you need to do, please get it over with.

"You said you knew the war was over," the first man said. "Who told you that? The civilians who found you could not even communicate with you."

"The leader had a device," Ketrick said. "We had several hours to try to converse, and by pointing to words and pictures, we could communicate after a fashion."

The questions moved on to other matters.

Finally, the first man pushed back his chair and gestured dismissively to the second.

"Very well, Captain Ketrick," the second man said. "You have answered our questions truthfully. While you did not answer some questions and were clearly not giving full answers to others, those were matters within your legal rights. We will arrange for you to be sent home, although that will take some time. The regular cargo ship will not be here for several days. You leave then."

"Even then," the first man added, "that will be a freighter that will take you to a commercial station. Another ship will take you from there to a military station, where you will be asked more questions and then sent on your way."

"Under the treaty," the second man said, "we can only hold you if you committed war crimes while in Federation territory. Do you need me to explain your legal rights under Federation law?"

"I have committed no crime," Ketrick said. "I am simply a soldier who served his emperor. The war is over, and I would very much like to go home."

"If you have any concerns over your treatment at home," the second man said, "you can be granted permission to remain in the Federation for the rest of your life."

"At a remote colony, like this one," the first man added. "We understand that the Empire Security Service can be very unpleasant toward soldiers who surrendered while still able to fight."

"I do not fear my own people," Ketrick said. "No honest and loyal Klingon fears the security police. While I did surrender, it was not because I could not fight, but because there was nothing to be accomplished by fighting. What could I do with a knife and a broken arm? Murder a few civilians? To what purpose?"

"Very well," the second man said. "I have business off-planet and will accompany you on the first leg of your journey."

"In the meantime," the first man said, "you are free to walk about the colony, so long as you give your word, in writing, that you will commit no act of violence, sabotage, or espionage."

"Certainly," Ketrick said. *On this rock? What do you have here that I could sabotage? I mean, what's worth giving up my trip home for? Really, are you stupid?*

"I will arrange for a place you can stay," the second man said. "And we will issue you some vouchers for meals at the corporate food service facility. If your arm bothers you, or you need other medical treatment, we will arrange that for you."

"You have been most professional," Ketrick said.

"I will have papers for you to sign momentarily," the first man said, getting out of his chair. "Then your attorney can take you to dinner. Good day, Marine Captain Ketrick."

"Good day to you as well," Ketrick responded. *What is an attorney?* he wondered. Ketrick finally decided that it must be the Federation term for "good cop." *Well, better him at dinner than the "bad cop." At least, I am going home.*

CASTES OF THE WORB TECHNOCRACY

By Gary Carney

A Biological Imperative

The political and societal subdivisions of the Worb Technocracy in the Omega Octant are defined by their species' biology, perhaps to a greater extent than most empires in known space. Biologically, the Worb defy straightforward classification for they exhibit the characteristics of animal, vegetable, and mineral in a single life form. Outwardly, each Worb looks like a two-meter-tall mushroom with a small cap 50-60cm in diameter with rippling fronds along the "stalk" that act as its breathing apparatus. Of the six tentacles extending from the lower portion of its stalks, three act as "legs" while the other three serve to guide the individual's movement, doubling as fine manipulators when the Worb is at rest. With a high metabolism and the need to spend half of its lifetime sleeping, each Worb strives to make the most of its time spent while active.

As an asexual species, fertile Worb reproduce through spore dispersal with thousands of spores produced in a given fertility cycle. Unlike other sentient species, only one in 10,000 of their progeny can grow into a fertile Worb; the rest are barren. Further, only one spore in 50,000 emerges as a sentient Worb. Non-intelligent Worb, fertile or otherwise, are culled from the populace and recycled as food. Rarest of all are those Worb (one in five million) that can both think and reproduce. This forms a defining social dynamic. The sentient yet barren Worb form the bulk of the populace, while the fertile sentient Worb have assumed the leadership role (and jealously assert it).

In addition, the Worb have a wide variety of subspecies. These alternate phenotypes have various physical quirks and reproduction rates, and the members of each subspecies (fertile and barren alike) together comprise a shared caste. In the pre-spaceflight era, many of these castes clashed in dozens of wars waged across the Worb homeworld. By the modern era, the Worb had settled into a common technocracy ruled by the *bgrwagic*, or "Fertile Council," with representatives of the various castes establishing unity, of a sort. (Certainly, in the wake of first contact with the Drex in Y130, the need to avoid internal conflict was put into an even sharper focus; hence the absence of any recorded civil conflict in Worb space after this date.)

While the Worb castes have avoided open internecine conflict in the modern era, that is not to say there is any love lost between the more prominent rivals on the Fertile Council.

The High Worb: (would-be) First among Equals

The High Worb are differentiated from their fellow Worb by a distinctively high, upturned cap as well as a slightly higher fertility rate. It is the latter trait which the High Worb see as the reason why they alone should control the Fertile Council: a goal of which the High Worb remind the rest of the Technocracy at every opportunity. Unsurprisingly, the High Worb are often challenged by other castes strong enough to stand in opposition to their unabashed arrogance. Others, perhaps those in less of a position to resist High Worb ambitions, can find themselves co-opted (willingly or otherwise) into supporting their goals.

The High Worb were the first to develop attack shuttles armed with subspace rockets, while the first dreadnoughts built by the Technocracy were through their efforts, intended by the High Worb as the "crowning achievement" which would solidify their claim to leadership of the Fertile Council for all time. Unfortunately for the Worb at large, the High Worb have not been immune to pettiness or spite; while they could not stop the Yellow Worb from the medium destroyer (a rival to their own preferred light destroyer), they refused to allow High Worb naval officers to serve aboard one and saw the production line shut down entirely once the Yellow Worb fell out of favor.

The Broad Worb: Mavericks and Adventurers

The Broad Worb are often derided as dangerously unstable, but regard themselves as adventurers willing to challenge the status quo. The Broad Worb comprise a political and economic power which no member of the Fertile Council can afford to ignore. The Broad Worb are great advocates of antiproton phasers as the ultimate weapon types and their starships and fighters are almost all phaser-armed. Broad and High Worb fighters will not serve in the same fighter squadrons, but carriers and ground bases operating each type of craft can be effective when operating in tandem. Naturally, the Broad and High Worb are each reluctant to share any of the credit for this with the other.

The Yellow Worb: Aggressors and Competitors

For a time, the Yellow Worb had a prominent place upon the Fertile Council, although they were widely seen as an aggressive and competitive bunch. Eventually, however, the caste lost much of its economic and political power to the High Worb.

The Yellow Worb designed the medium destroyer, which (with two turrets and an impressive combat record) was the superior ship of that size. The Fertile Council favored the light destroyer but did not block production of the Yellow Worb version until High Worb pressure shut down the Yellow Worb shipyard.

The Low Worb: Scientists and Pacifists

The Low Worb are renowned for their scientific prowess and their commitment to non-aggression. While they were willing to defend the Worb species, they preferred to use their ships for exploration and not in offensive campaigns.

The Low Worb build and operate the fleet's scouts and use them to push the boundaries of knowledge and for defense, but many Low Worb commanders refuse to take part in offensive campaigns, leaving Worb fleets without electronic warfare support. While this has earned the Low Worb a reputation as cowards, the Technocracy as a whole has gained many benefits from the Low Worb's scientific endeavors, as well as their stalwart efforts in the face of the Invasions of the Sixth Cycle.

The White Worb: Masters of Logistics

The White Worb do not build warships in their own right. Instead, they operated many freighters, bases, cargo shuttles, and other elements required to keep the Worb in business as a starfaring society. This makes the White Worb important to their fellow castes. The White outposts are used as waypoints, resupply nodes, repair stations, and border watch posts.

The Spotted Worb: The Art of Charisma

The Spotted Worb have earned a name for themselves as charismatic individuals. Their more open nature has helped them to smooth over some of the sharper disputes between other castes. They often serve as officers on Technocracy multi-caste starships.

The Ridged Worb: Duplicitous Recluses

The Ridged Worb limit contact with other castes and show an inclination towards double-dealing and court intrigue. (To be fair to the Ridged Worb, many of the other castes have been more than willing to engage in such acts themselves.)

Other Castes: The Also-Rans

A series of other, smaller castes exist on the Fertile Council, and within Worb society as a whole. Some attempt to make a mark in one particular field; others try to do as much as their more limited resources allow. However, while each is locked in a constant political struggle for power and influence, each of them is also limited by the lower reproduction rates of its respective subspecies. This biological impediment places them on the opposite end of the scale from the more bountiful High Worb.

The Secret Order of the “F” and the “E”

MEMO: June 22, 2013
 From: FBI SAIC, Columbus OH
 To: Director of Homeland Security
 Re: Suspected Terrorist Group “Order of the ‘F’ and the ‘E’”

The following are the transcripts of the listening devices planted in the designated meeting room of the target hotel.

Sound of knocking on door.

Voice #1: “Who is there?” [FBI Note: Data comparison with military recordings identifies this voice as a renegade colonel who left the Air Force under curious circumstances and has been involved with this terrorist group for some years.]

Voice #2: “Me ... Ted ... a friend ... Oh, yeah, I forgot ... a new brother in the order of the ‘F’ and the ‘E’ asks for entry into the conclave.” [FBI Note: Data comparison with court transcripts identifies Voice #2 as a lawyer from Dallas, Texas. Further analysis of archives indicates that while this group has existed for years they did not begin using the name “the F and the E” until the last year.]

Voice #1: “Did you bring refreshments?”

Voice #2: “I found this bag of stale Fritos in my car.” [FBI Note: The meaning of this codeword is unclear at this time.]

Voice #1: “Enter, brother.”

Voice #2: “Sorry, I had trouble finding this place. It’s not listed in the program.”

Voice #1: “Of course it isn’t. We’re not part of that bunch at the convention center.” [FBI Note: Reference unclear.]

Voice #3: “You mean they threw us out for ‘treason’ after last year when you had to go do your own thing and take us with you.” [FBI Note: Keyword “treason” resulted in this conversation being pulled from the Echelon Intercept Database for further analysis.]

Voice #4: “Hey, we had a better time last year than ever before. No hassles, no rules, lower cost ...”

Voice #3: “No food court, no dealer hall, no seminars, no new products, and *he* didn’t even show up.”

Voice #1: “Stop complaining. *They* threw *us* out.”

Voice #5: “Not technically. *We could* have come here.”

Voice #1: “Not me, and not most of us. Most of us had kids in school and could not be here after they changed the schedule.” [FBI Note: The phrase “kids in school” is thought to mean “terrorists in training camp.” The reference to a change in schedule may be why no terrorist attack was detected during the previous 12 months. Twenty-three field agents are digging into that.]

Voice #4: “You weren’t followed, were you?”

Voice #2: “No, I went through the Puffing Billy room to make sure I lost any tail in the crowd. [FBI Note: The phrase “Puffing Billy room” is thought to refer to a nearby Amtrack station. Fifteen field agents are now checking that facility for any suspicious devices.]

Voice #1: “Now that Brother Ted is here, can we get going?”

Voice #3: “That’s gonna be kinda hard after the fuzz confiscated all of our counters.” [FBI Note: The term “fuzz” refers to law enforcement. The meaning of “counters” may refer to dangerous radiological materials or perhaps drugs.]

Voice #4: “Yeah, some idiot had to haul his cartload of counters right past the registration desk. Those Gamma goons said that they were prohibited because of last year’s incident.” [FBI Note: The term “goon” is a clear reference to prison guards. Based on this, the Greek letter “gamma” is thought to refer to the Federal supermax prison at Marion, Illinois. This part of the conversation

is thought to refer to a failed attempt to smuggle contraband to terrorist suspects imprisoned at Marion.]

Voice #1: “They had no right to take my counters. The US Constitution doesn’t allow them to do that.” [FBI Note: Another reference to “counters” which may refer to radiological devices intended to cause a mass-casualty event, i.e., a “dirty bomb.” It is well known that terrorist groups try to use their “constitutional rights” to subvert the needs for reasonable homeland security requirements.]

Voice #6: “I think I got this worked out. The peanuts are the clinks. The raisins are the Feds. The candy corn are the furballs, and the Hershey’s kisses are the rockheads.” [FBI Note: Analysis of these codewords is ongoing. The “Feds” are obviously Federal law enforcement agencies. The term “clinks” may refer to prison guards.]

Voice #7: “What about the gorns and roms?” [FBI Note: The term “roms” may refer to the Romney campaign staff, but this is unclear. No one has identified what a “gorn” is. The only reference in the database is to one episode of a 1960s television show and obviously irrelevant.]

Voice #6: “We won’t get around to them for a week. We can find something in the meantime.”

Voice #8: “You mean /can find something in the meantime. You already used all my snacks for counters. Why don’t you use Ted’s stale Fritos for the snakes?” [FBI Note: The term “snakes” is unclear but may relate to the Israeli codeword “viper” which means “nerve gas.”]

Sound of knocking on door.

Voice #4: “Cheeze it, the Gamma goons!”

Voice #5: “Ted, you *were* followed, you idiot!”

Voice #3: “Hide the maps!”

Voice #1: “Calm down, everyone! ... Who is there?”

Voice #9: “The Mentor, a friend to the order.” [FBI Note: This codename is thought to refer to a native-born American terrorist suspect with former connections to military intelligence and a radical Texas-based militia group.]

Voice #1: “Enter, Mentor.”

Voice #9: “Sorry for the delay. Jean would not let me out of the booth while the media was hanging around. She sent brownies.” [FBI Note: “Jean” has been identified as a college professor from the southeastern US whom even liberal colleagues refer to as “radical.” The term “booth” may refer to a secret terrorist headquarters. It is thought that “media” may refer to Homeland Security agents. The term “brownie” clearly refers to marijuana.]

Voice #3: “He brought counters!”

Voice #6: “Real ones?”

Voice #9: “I am a river to my people.” [FBI Note: This phrase is commonly used by Middle Eastern warlords who spread a small portion of the money collected from bribes and other corrupt activities to the population to maintain loyalty. Refer to Anthony Quinn in the movie “Lawrence of Arabia” for an example.]

Voice #3: “He brought seltorians!” [FBI Note: Other references to “seltorians” as “bugs” may mean this is code for electronic listening devices.]

Voice #9: “Just got them from the printer.” [FBI Note: The term “printer” is possibly a reference to an organized crime group that sells weapons and explosives to terrorist groups on a “no questions asked” basis.]

Voice #1: “Did you bring rules for the seltorians?” [FBI Note: The term “rules” refers to detailed plans for an attack.]

Voice #9: “Nah, I figured we’d just wing it.”

END OF TRANSCRIPT

This group obviously poses a clear and present danger to the American people. The immediate arrest of the entire group is suggested at the earliest opportunity.

STAR FLEET COMMUNICATIONS CENTER

PLATINUM HAT

Our second internet *SFB* International Championship Tournament is nearly over. The final four players (Paul Scott, Bill Schoeller, Greg Dieckhaus, and Ken Lin) are all former Fleet Captains. We had 38 players (six more than last year). The event is run through *SFBOL* and we thank Paul Franz for hosting it. You can watch the progress of this tournament on our BBS or at *SFBOL*.

Just as this issue went to press, Paul Scott defeated Gregg Dieckhaus in a heroic 22-turn slugfest to win the Platinum Hat for 2012.

ORIGINS 2013: THE RETURN

With the decision by GAMA to return Origins to a more plausible date (12-16 June, not during the school year), ADB, Inc., has agreed to return to Origins next summer and present our usual assortment of events and seminars. Do join us there if you can and meet the ADB, Inc., crew and your on-line friends.

CUSTOMER SUPPORT

CAPTAIN'S LOG: SUPPLEMENTAL FILE

The *Captain's Log #46: Supplemental File* was available when this issue was released for mail orders. As with *CL#45SF*, it includes mostly designer notes and rejected tactical papers.

STAR FLEET SPARE PARTS AND MAIL ORDER

You can order any product directly from ADB, Inc. You can also order extra counters, maps, and other components. Send a stamped self-addressed #10 business-size envelope for a catalog. We accept Visa, MasterCard, checks drawn on a US bank in US funds, and money orders in US funds. UPS shipping in the continental US is \$10 per order. Post Office shipping in the US and foreign orders will be charged the actual cost; contact ADB for the cost. Texas residents, please add 8.25% sales tax.

The most important thing you can do when you place an order is give us a valid email address that you will check a few times in the next 48 hours. Far too often, orders are held up for days while we wait for your answer to a simple question.

STAR FLEET UNIVERSE ON THE WEB

The website is at www.StarFleetGames.com and our bulletin board at www.StarFleetGames.com/discuss is used by hundreds of *SFU* players to discuss tactics, rules, and products. We have been continually upgrading the website to serve you better. The site at www.FederationCommander.com is there to bring in new customers with easy-to-access information. We ask all our veteran customers to help the new customers get started.

You can contact ADB, Inc. by email at any of the following:
Rules@StarFleetGames.com (rules questions)
Design@StarFleetGames.com (submissions)
Sales@StarFleetGames.com (product schedules, orders)
Playtest@StarFleetGames.com (reports and requests)
Support@StarFleetGames.com (convention support)

You can also telephone us at 806-351-1950.

Mail: ADB, Inc., PO Box 8759, Amarillo, TX 79114.

COMMO OFFICER REPORTS

It seems my work is never done (says Jean Sexton), as I am the one who has to tell everyone what is going on (and coax the Steves to tell me what they're doing). Let's get started!

ELECTRONIC SALES GROW

Sales of PDFs via the e23 website continue to grow. (We sell more than anyone there other than SJG itself.) The number and variety of products expand every month. We have *Federation Commandership* card packs, *SFB* rulebooks (and now, SSD books!), *F&E* (some rulebooks and other things), *Starmada* ship cards and rules, and all four of our *GURPS* books. We are adding many out-of-print products there such as *Star Fleet Times*.

Our own website has a page listing the available books:
<http://www.starfleetgames.com/E23%20Adobe%20info.shtml>

This links directly to e23 at: <http://e23.sjgames.com/>

We have also placed our *PD20M* books on DriveThru RPG:
<http://www.starfleetgames.com/Drive%20Thru%20RPG.shtml>

Some have asked if we will load products other than *PD20M* and *PD1* onto DriveThru; we don't plan to. Our customers can get them either place just as easily, and it makes more sense for us to focus our efforts promoting one major site.

HAILING FREQUENCIES

This is our free monthly electronic newsletter about *all* of our games (not just *Federation Commander*), with updated product schedules, tactics, fiction, contest winners, questions and answers, and much more. Go to:

<http://www.FederationCommander.com/newsletter/past.html>

This is the archive of past issues. You can register to get notified when a new issue is available (about the 10th of each month). You have to actually register for *HF* through the software portal so that we don't get labeled a "spam" mailer.

Almost 1,900 people subscribe to *Hailing Frequencies*.

STAR FLEET ALERTS

These are the official PDF press releases which go out to the wholesalers, retailers, game industry media, and to those individuals (such as yourself) who have asked to be put on the mailing list. The most recent Star Fleet Alerts are on the website:

<http://www.starfleetgames.com/starfleetaalert.shtml>

Most of these are about new product releases, but we also use them for special events and to promote our various other activities (such as those listed here).

We really need to do more alerts and make them more relevant and I am determined that this will happen in 2013.

If you haven't signed up for the Star Fleet Alerts yet, email Support@StarFleetGames.com and ask to be put on the list.

STAR FLEET RANGERS

We have started to do more with the Rangers demo program, which involves gamers doing demonstrations (teaching sessions) of our games at conventions and game stores. (You can also conduct demos at game-club meetings under some special requirements.) Anyone can become a Ranger. Being a Ranger earns you honors and awards (see below) but also is the best way to recruit new players.

You can sign up as a Ranger on the website at <http://>

www.starfleetgames.com/rangers/index.shtml. The website has a wealth of information on how to be an effective Ranger.

Every demo you do gets you a battle star on your Combat Action Honor Bar (and a \$5 credit on buying games from ADB, Inc.). You can do demos of *Star Fleet Battles*, *Federation Commander*, *Federation & Empire*, *Star Fleet Battle Force*, *Prime Directive* (each published *PD* game system counts as a different game), or the *SFU* versions of *Starmada* and *ACTA*.

Anyone who signs up is designated a Ranger Recruit. Anyone who has done at least one demo is a Ranger. Anyone who does five demos (in at least two venues) receives the designation of Veteran Ranger. Anyone who does 10 demos (in at least three venues, including at least three of our games) is designated as a Senior Ranger and earns a Star Fleet Commendation medal. Doing 25 demos (in at least four venues, and including at least four games) gets you the coveted title of Master Ranger and a Star Fleet Bronze Star medal.

FACEBOOK

Our page on Facebook continues to grow (passing 1,400 friends this December) and has become the “quick way” to stay in touch with what’s going on in the *SFU*. I post about five times a day, with news, links to the blog, art, and other things. I am the main voice you will hear there. If I don’t know the answer to your question, I will pester someone in the office until I get you one.

We hope to see you soon! Here’s the link:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Amarillo-Design-Bureau-Inc/231728653279?ref=mf>.

Hundreds of people on our page on Facebook have never been on our BBS, yet add to the ongoing development of the *SFU*. If you are very busy on a given day, checking our page would tell you quickly if something important has been announced.

VIDEOS

Customer Support Director Mike Sparks has continued releasing on YouTube a series of videos about our products. These provide information to anyone who wants to know what’s in a product, or what products came out in a given month. You can find them at: <http://www.youtube.com/user/starfleetgames>

The most interesting video uploaded recently shows Steve Cole (well, his fingers) actually playing a battle in *Star Fleet Marines* and explaining the rules as he goes along.

You are also welcome to create your own videos about our products and your experiences playing them. We will recognize the better ones of those with combat awards and gift certificates for the best of them. If you upload a video about our games, please be sure to email us and tell us where to find it.

AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

We need three or four effective and energetic people to help me (Jean Sexton) in spreading the word. Each will be assigned a major gaming website, and is expected to pass along to that website any news or information we release. They should also bring back to us any questions, reviews, or comments about our company or products posted there. Successful ambassadors who serve for a year can earn some free products and the coveted First Contact medal on the Wall of Honor.

CUSTOMER REQUEST LINE

Customers often ask us for things, and we provide them when we can. (Steve Cole devotes an hour every Wednesday afternoon to dealing with these, often creating custom avatars, converting specific new ship cards for the next *Communique*, sending countersheet graphics to *FCOL*, finding lost documents, and so forth.) The rest of the staff usually provides even faster responses to requests they handle. No reasonable request is ignored (although some take hours to do and get done over weeks or even months as time allows). We triage these. The easy ones

get done quickly, while one of the harder ones get a little progress each week.

THE DISCUS BULLETIN BOARD

Operating for 14 years now, this is our primary game development platform. Over 1,400 fans are registered, and there are three dozen active topics every day, ranging from news to product ideas, from rules questions (with answers) to tactical advice (with counter tactics), from ship proposals to player campaigns. While the board is huge, the powerful software allows you to customize your free account to only read the topics you want. This board requires “real name” registration so that you get credit for anything you propose or contribute.

You can find this at: www.StarFleetGames.com/discus/

THE PHP FORUM

A more recent addition to the website, the Forum uses the common PHP software, complete with avatars, sigs, and screen names. Many players find the software more welcoming.

<http://www.starfleetgames.com/federation/phpbb2/index.php>

ADB ON TWITTER?

Not so far, but Steve Cole continues to post “practice tweets” on the BBS which I put on our page on Facebook. I really need to get him moving and do these tweets for real, but Leanna says that this won’t be allowed until he proves that he can produce relevant tweets on a consistent basis. Right now, he often goes weeks without remembering to “pseudo-tweet.” For now, I will make sure to remind him to pseudo-tweet at least twice a week. Once I’m in Texas, real tweets can start to happen.

TALKSHOE

Paul Franz runs a live “radio talk show” via the Internet every Thursday night at 9:30pm Eastern Time (daylight time when applicable). He hosts *SFU* players who want to discuss various issues, and sometimes has surprise guests (Stephen V. Cole, Jean Sexton, Steven P. Petrick) appear.

You can join the fun either by going through the TalkShoe website: (URL: <http://www.talkshoe.com/tc/17702>) or by phoning in (724-444-7444) and entering the TalkShoe ID for the event (17702). You can ask questions or just listen.

TalkShoe is also downloadable as a podcast for those that cannot make it. Also, if you can’t make it but would like to have a particular subject discussed, email Paul Franz beforehand.

www.StarFleetGames.com

That is, of course, our main website, and it is full of things that most players do not even know are there, but would be thrilled to find if they only knew. You should, sometime, go to the Site Master Index

<http://www.starfleetgames.com/masterindex.shtml>

and just read down the list of links.

Some of the things included in the site are an art gallery (includes artist portfolios, demotivational posters, wallpaper, countersheet graphics, and much more), binder spine cards, the cadet game, downloadable convention ads, lists of starship names, the Middle Years, a text version of the catalog, the free demo version of *Federation Commander*, all of the Input Guide articles from *Captain’s Log*, the Omega Octant, play aids, subpages for each product line (and many individual products), historical maps, and the Wall of Honor.

The Master Index has links to everything mentioned on these two pages.

I would like people to email me about what you want to see in this section of *Captain’s Log*, as well as what you would like to see in *Communique*, *Hailing Frequencies*, and on our page on *Facebook*.



YES, WE DID SOME NEW PRODUCTS

The fall schedule was characterized by the short time period (since *Captain's Log #45* was three months later than it should have been) and by the delay caused by the die-cut counters being later than expected.

We used the extra time to make the products even better and to prepare the way for new products for next spring.

That said, virtually all of the fall's new products appeared in January and simultaneously with this issue of *Captain's Log*.

FC: REINFORCEMENTS ATTACK

The "big *Fed Commander* product for 2012" was shipped simultaneously with this issue of *Captain's Log* in mid-January 2013. As promised, it included 18 new ships and a new monster. It appeared along with *Booster Packs #34, #35, and #36*, which have a total of 21 new ships. These 40 new ships give the commanders of every empire new options to use in building squadrons for tournaments and scenarios.

This product was a good experience for all of us, as we saw hundreds of *FC* players participate in the various polls and surveys to select the new ships. That was an interesting experience, because we had to balance the most-wanted new ships with the need to give every empire something fun, and to fill in the "missing" ships from the established types, such as heavy battlecruisers and battle escorts.

SEARMADA NOVA BOOKS

We have released *Battleships Armada* (in both Nova and Admiral versions) and Nova versions of *Alien Armada* and *Distant Armada*. The two battleship books were delayed slightly by the game designer taking time out to have a baby. (Well, his wife had the baby, but we're told he helped.) *Battleships Armada* includes the ships from *Transports Attacked* as well as some assorted *SFB/FC* ships from *Communique*.

The other two, *Alien Armada* and *Distant Armada*, were done months ago (and released as PDFs on e23) but could not be released in hard copy because the wholesalers wanted them to come out at the same time as a major *Federation Commander* product to simplify their receiving departments.

SFB ADVANCED MISSIONS

This classic product has recently been updated to a new 2012 edition. All of the errata, clarifications, examples, and revisions to date were added by *Star Fleet Battles* department commander Steven P. Petrick.

While he was at it, he updated the *SFB Master Rulebook*, which brings it to a new 2012 edition as well. Anyone who bought the *SFB Master Rulebook* on e23 got a new updated PDF for free. Sorry, but there is no practical way to do an update for the hard copy as this update added new items to nearly 100 pages. The *Update D Errata File* on the website lists the changes.

CAPTAIN'S LOG #46

Well, here it is. We're sorry for the delay, caused first by the lack of fiction, and then by the lack of cover art.



EVEN MORE NEW PRODUCTS

The spring schedule will be defined by the new counters we now have in the warehouse.

STAR FLEET MARINES: LAST STAND

With the counters printed and the rules well in hand, the last step to releasing the product in February will be designing the six new scenarios and the map.

SFB: THE LOST EMPIRES

After much debate, it was decided that the major new *SFB* product for March 2013 will be *Module C6: Lost Empires*. This will include the General War versions of the extinct Carnivon and Paravian empires, along with alternative histories in which they would still be around. The Paravians have become Romulan allies, forcing the ISC to abandon its pacificistic ways and ally with the Gorns in a struggle to survive. The Carnivons will turn the Four Powers War into a three-cornered dog-and-cat fight, as the Lyrans and Kzintis cannot agree on anything except that they hate the Carnivons as much as they hate each other.

SEARMADA NOVA BOOKS

The major new release for 2013 will bring the ships and empires from *War & Peace* into the *Starmada* game system. This will probably include the ships from *Reinforcements*.

A CALL TO ARMS: STAR FLEET

The second volume will be in 2013. The first new miniatures, including the Federation battleship, have already appeared.

Traveller Prime Directive

As we feared, the need for 12 complete sets of deck plans overwhelmed the art staff (which hasn't done 12 sets of plans in the last decade), slightly delaying this book.

FC: SOMETHING WILL ATTACK

Another new product will appear during 2013 or 2014.

CAPTAIN'S LOG #47

We plan to get this product line back on the normal May-November schedule with our next (May) issue.

FEDERATION ADMIRAL

While we cannot promise a release date, this product has not been forgotten, and work continues on it.

PLENTY OF OTHER PROJECTS

We almost wish we had never mentioned *Tribbles vs. Klingons* because the bizarre world of overseas game production is taking endless time to figure out, but it *will* be on Kickstarter during 2013. The next *F&E* product will be in 2013 or 2014. We'll do *Battlestations Star Fleet* as a joint venture with Gorilla Games, probably through Kickstarter. We're plotting a small expansion for *SFBF* through Kickstarter.

STAR FLEET AWARDS

STAR FLEET GOLD STAR (2012) ☆: Steven P. Petrick

STAR FLEET SILVER STAR (2012) ☆: Stephen V. Cole, Mike Curtis, Paul Franz, Xander Fulton, Daniel Kast, Mike Sparks, Matthew Sprange, Chuck Strong, Sandrine Thirache, Tony L. Thomas, Adam Turner, Andy Vancil, Mike West.

CHAMPION OF LIFE (2012) ♣: Leanna M. Cole, Jean Sexton.

STAR FLEET BRONZE STAR (2012) ☆: Frank Brooks, Shawn Hantke, Loren Knight, Thomas Matthews, Dale McKee, Scott Moellmer, Ryan Opel, Joel Shutts, Art Trotman.

STAR FLEET COMMENDATIONS (2012): John D. Berg, Mike Filsinger, James Goodrich, Hugh Paton, Gary Plana, John Sickels, Scott Tenhoff; Steven Marsh (e23).

ORDER OF THE WARLORD: Arthur De Laura (Game 86).

MERITORIOUS SERVICE MEDAL: Shawn Hantke (PDFs), Daniel Kast (Starmada Nova); Paul Franz, Scott Moellmer, Tony L. Thomas (Staff).

COMMAND STAR MEDAL (2012): Paul Scott.

20-YEAR SERVICE MEDAL: Gary Plana, Owen G. Riley III.

10-YEAR SERVICE MEDAL: Scott Tenhoff, Adam Turner.

5-YEAR SERVICE MEDAL: Roger Rardain, Jean Sexton, Art Trotman.

INTELLIGENCE STAR IN GOLD (50): Charles Chapel (191), Shawn Hantke (93), Jean Sexton (60), Patrick Sledge (50), Bill Stec (80), Kenny Thomas (56).

INTELLIGENCE STAR IN BRONZE (10): Ryan Opel (13), Tony L. Thomas (11).

INTELLIGENCE COMMENDATION (1): Stuart Ashton (1), Stacy Bartley (1), Randy Blair (1), Chris Braun (5), James Brown (1), Jamie Carney (4), Paul Cordiero (1), Mike Curtis (1), Peter S. DiMitri (1), Xander Fulton (6), Dave Hindelang (1), Mark Hoyle (4), Robert Hymeson (1), Daniel G. Knipfer (1), K. David Ladagne (1), Jeff Laikind (7), Troy Latta (4), Andrew Marrington (1), Will McCammon (3), Robert McCord (5), Michael Moe (1), John Morse (1), Mike Novean (1), R. Brodie Nyboer (1), Joshua Pennick (6), David Rybacki (2), Joel Shutts (1), Dixon Simpkins (3), Mike Slade (3), Phillip Stacy (6), Steve Still (1), Chuck Strong (2), Michael Tisdale (5), Mark Tutton (1), Simon Waldoek (7), Todd Warnken (1), John Wyszynski (1). (Intelligence awards are given for reporting violations of our copyrights. The numbers indicate total pirate kills including previous awards.)

COMBAT ACTION RIBBON: Alan Davies (Questing Knight Games, UK, 6 Jan), Mark Notestine (Lake Beach, IL, 4 Nov 2012), Bill Stec (Fall-In Con, Lancaster PA, 3 Nov 2012; Gamers of Winter, Grantville PA, 20 Jan 2013).

SPAMBOT DEFENSE BAR (CL46): Battle stars for Howard Bampton, Galen Davenport, Xander Fulton, Shawn Hantke, Thomas Mathews, Terry O'Carroll, Jean Sexton, Bill Stec, Tony L. Thomas.

HONOR BAR (Research): Jean Sexton.

HONOR BAR (Pirate Hunter): Charles Chapel (7), Shawn Hantke (1,729), Simon Robinson (1), Jean Sexton (70), Kenny Thomas (3), Tony Thomas (1). (Awarded for finding non-ADB pirates that we reported to other companies, including: Mongoose, Steve Jackson Games, Paramount, and Zocchi.)

DEPARTMENT HEAD: John Berg (Galactic Conquest, 6th star), Frank Brooks (PBEM, 7th star), Leanna M. Cole (Business Office, 14th Star), Stephen V. Cole (Sysop, 14th star), Mike Curtis (FEAR, 4th star; Sysop, 3rd star), Paul Franz (SFBOL, 12th star; Warlord, 8th star), Daniel Kast (Starmada, 4th star), Steve Petrick (SFB, 6th star; Sysop, 13th star), Owen Riley (JAG, 20th star), Jean Sexton (Webmom, 7th star; Facebook,

3rd star; Prime Directive, 5th star), Joel Shutts (Website, 3rd star), Chuck Strong (F&E, 4th star), Mike West (FC Q&A, 5th star; Forum Sysop, 6th star).

OFFICE DUTY: Leanna M. Cole (14th star), Stephen V. Cole (14th star), Jean Sexton (snowflake), Joel Shutts (3rd star), Mike Sparks (8th star), Steven P. Petrick (14th star).

OUTSTANDING SERVICE RIBBON ★

Starmada Nova: Daniel Kast.

Battleships Armada Nova: Daniel Kast, Adam Turner.

FC Reinforcements Attack; Boosters 34, 35, 36: Mike West.

Captain's Log #46: Stephen V. Cole, Joe Gallagher, Steven P. Petrick, Jean Sexton.

SUPERIOR SERVICE RIBBON +

FC Reinforcements Attack; Boosters 34, 35, 36: Stephen V. Cole, Jean Sexton, Adam Turner.

Captain's Log #46: Mike Curtis, Ken Kazinski, Loren Knight, Chuck Strong, Tony L. Thomas, Adam Turner.

MERITORIOUS SERVICE RIBBON ◆

Battleships Armada Nova: Terry O'Carroll, Jean Sexton.

Distant Armada Nova: Marc Adda, Paul Franz, Terry O'Carroll, Paul Robinson.

Alien Armada Nova: Marc Adda, Paul Franz, Terry O'Carroll, Paul Robinson.

FC Reinforcements Attack; Boosters 34, 35, 36: Art Trotman, Scott Moellmer.

Communique 2013: Stephen V. Cole, Scott Moellmer, Steven P. Petrick, Jean Sexton, Art Trotman, Mike West.

Dec 2012 FC card reprint: Scott Moellmer, Jean Sexton, Mike West, Stephen V. Cole.

Captain's Log #46: Gary Carney, Anthony Cutcliffe, Dal Downing, Frank Brooks, Paul Franz, Stewart Frazier, Michael Grafton, Daniel Kast, Thomas Mathews, Scott Moellmer, Terry O'Carroll, Ryan Opel, Hugh Paton, N. Eric Phillips, John Sickels, John Trauger, Art Trotman, Andy Vancil, Mike West, Clint Woodall.

GENERAL SERVICE RIBBON ■

Captain's Log #46: Howard Bampton, John D. Berg, Jon Berry, Nick Blank, Joe Carlson, Steve Cain, Mike Calhoun, John Christie, Paul Cordiero, Eddie Crutchfield, Mike Curtis, Jim Dauphinais, Dal Downing, Joshua Driscoll, George Duffy, Richard Eitzen, Ted Fay, Mike Filsinger, Xander Fulton, Michael Guntley, Fred Kreller, Alex Lyons, A. David Merritt, Paul Pease, Matthew Potter, Wayne D. Power, Chris Reando, Paul Scott, Greg Smith, William Stec, Scott Tenhoff, Kenneth Thomas, Alan Trevor, Jeff Wile, John Wyszynski.

SCATTERPACK

This section traditionally includes last minute notes and things we forgot to include elsewhere.

The fiction story for CL#47 has already been found so at least we won't have that crisis to face in the Spring.

Our Origins booth will be more crowded than ever this year, and we will not be bringing most older products. If you intend to pick up something at the show, it's best to order it in advance. Our shopping cart will include a Pick-up-at-Origins option starting sometime in May.

After fighting against the tides of progress as long as we could, we started upgrading the company computer network, bringing in two Mac G5s which run both Classic and Tiger-10.4. We'll see how that works out. The fourteen-year-old G3s are clearly on their last electrons and the thirteen-year-old G4, while still stable, has had more and more problems. In a month, two more G5s will complete the upgrade.

TRIVIDEO SCHEDULE, Y181

Preview of the New Fall Season

DRONES: Templar Brennan, the science officer on the drone bombardment cruiser *Agincourt*, becomes the captain after all higher officers are killed in battle. She is determined to pursue her scientific efforts to build a better drone while ensuring that the ship completes its annoying official missions.

MOB STARSHIP: Commander Garth Devlin worked hard to become captain of the *USS Chicago*. He was the only native Orion to hold such a post in Star Fleet due to the inherent prejudice. Determined to perform his duty, he finds himself blackmailed by the Orion Pirates (who are threatening his sister's life) into doing small favors for them. The favors keep getting bigger.

USS REVENGE: Twenty years ago, Captain Arthur Clarke was court-martialed, blamed for a mistake actually made by a junior assistant weapons officer, Albert Grayson. Now, Grayson is captain, and the new junior assistant weapons officer is Emily Thornapple, a promising academy graduate. What nobody knows is that Emily is actually Amber Clarke, daughter of Arthur, and she's out to bring down those who destroyed her father's career.

STELLAR CRIMES: Lady Krenda, a squire paladin of the Klingon Empire, and her disfunctional crew of police investigators crack open the cases of treason, corruption, and murder that the powers-that-be would just as soon stay closed. She also spends time covering up the bumbling antics of Lieutenants Krovenza and Klynn, who are always working an angle.

HAWAII CB: Steve McScarlett is the successful commander of a prime team, but politicians on the Federation Council maneuver him (against his will) into the captain's chair of the heavy command cruiser *Hawaii*. His mission is to eliminate the endemic corruption among the officers while accomplishing the most dangerous missions Star Fleet can find.

THE PSYONICIST: Partly Sane is a Vulcan born on a remote colony planet. Orphaned as an infant, he was raised by humans who were astounded by his logic, insight, and mental abilities. Now a consultant to the Federation Marshal's Service, Partly Sane has all of the abilities of his species, but none of the discipline, tact, or manners. Most think he's just a jerk.

STARCASTLE: On a starbase in the most populous region of the Federation, a bumbling trivideo mystery writer named Richard Reynolds teams up with ace detective Kate Beckham to look into homicides and other crimes that no other combination of skills could hope to solve.

SFIS: Laramie Jedidiah Glibb leads a team of the best military police investigators for the Star Fleet Investigation Service as they delve into crimes of murder, passion, treason, and (worst of all) violations of the Prime Directive that have caused global warming on countless unsuspecting planets.

ARROWHEAD: A decade before the founding of the United Federation of Planets, a crusading trust-fund kid fights for justice, taking matters into his own hands, and leaving each of the miscreants he punishes marked with a golden arrowhead.

BEAUTY AND THE KZINTI: Klingon policewoman Kat Kreuk fights crime on Klinshai with the help of a Kzinti renegade, Zinvent, who escaped from a Klingon prison camp. Zinvent would be shot on sight if any other Klingon policeman saw him, but cannot resist the strange attraction he feels for the Klingon woman.

GREENBLOODS: Federation police commissioner Seagan, a Vulcan, insists on having his entire family present for dinner once a month, including Admiral Sregan, Federation Councilor Saegan, Vulcan Governor Srogan, and Federation Attorney General T'reagan. Their dinner table conversation includes not only family business, but the fate of the Federation itself!

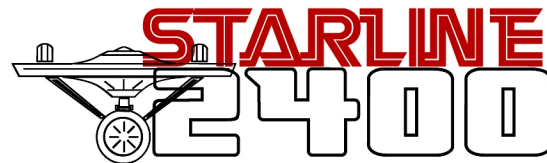
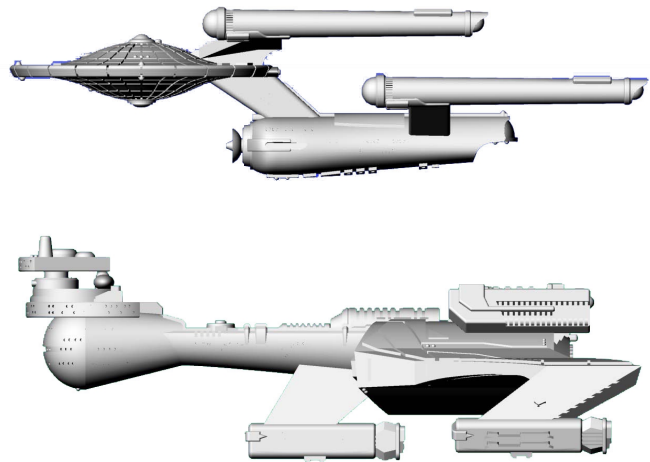
ONCE UPON A TIME WARP: The Evil King Rex, last of the Old Kings, refused to leave with his cohorts, and instead brought his minions through a time warp to the General War.



PHASE ONE COMPLETE, NOW FOR PHASE TWO

Mongoose has completed all of the Starline 2500 ships that were in the first volume of *ACTASF*. Some of these won't actually appear for a couple of weeks, and singles may take longer as they focus on getting the boxes out first.

While there is no final definitive list of ships in the second volume of *ACTASF (Battle Fleets)*, we do know some of the ships it will include. The first four miniatures (Federation CB and BB, Klingon E5 and F5W) will be out in January.



We expected to have made progress on getting the 2400 series gunboats (PFs) out by now, but this was slightly delayed by many factors. Watch the website forums and our page on Facebook for updated plans.

We do plan to add several new ships (including the Klingon HF5 and Romulan DemonHawk) and to ensure that any significant new ship added to the 2500 range is duplicated in the veteran 2400 range.

ARTISTS IN THIS ISSUE

Xander Fulton: 105
 Stephen V. Cole: 75, 92.
 Loren Knight: 3, 7, 11, 23, 26, 95.
 Sandrine Thirache: 36, 100, 102, 123, 125.
 Adam Turner: 45, 47, 50, 60, 65, 82.
 Hugh Paton: 108, 109.

TO ASK THE QUESTION WHY?

TECHNOLOGY: The 174-Megaton Question

Why did a 174-megaton explosion of the *MacArthur* destroy the entire planet of Remus? The Soviets detonated a 50 megaton bomb that was hardly noticed.

Because the explosion was only the start of a chain of events that included secondary explosions of Romulan facilities, as well as the resulting environmental devastation. Remus being a very dry Class-L world, it did not have the huge oceans to act as heat sinks and the periodic rainfall to wash the air clear of dust. (And, being a Class-L planet, it had a lot more dust thrown up by the original blast.)

Why did the *MacArthur* cause a 174-megaton explosion when the heavy cruiser that blew up the planet killer caused a paltry 97.4 megaton explosion?

Because the cruiser was damaged and only had the impulse engines to detonate, while the *MacArthur* (despite combat damage) had other functional systems that added up to approximately 174 megatons.

HISTORY

Why is it a given that the Gorns could have destroyed the Romulan Empire in Y121? The Romulans have a larger economy, massive 113 EPs compared to 87 EPs for the Gorns.

Because the story is more complicated. First, you're counting the economy by General War standards. In Y121, the Romulans had no tactical warp capability, and their economy was more sluggish. The Romulans might have had more total ships, but the command limits mean any battle is 10 vs. 10, not 10 who traveled there vs. 100 who were there to start with.

More to the point, economy isn't everything. You can have all the economy in the universe but if your ships cannot effectively fight the enemy, the enemy will just come and take your money. The Gorns had tactical warp and could move their ships around Romulan space faster than the Romulans could react, allowing the Gorns to amass their ships at whatever point was weakest and destroy it, steadily reducing the Romulan economy.

While the Romulans had sublight fighters, the Gorns had transporter bombs (with no Romulan transporters to reply to such weapons) and could easily mop up sublight fighters.

Why didn't the Gorns pen the Romulans onto their planets instead of just destroying their warp technology labs?

Because by Y121 the Romulans were already on a lot of planets, some of which were already major industrial centers. The nature of the Paravians was such that they had only one planet they "lived on" and everything else was just a place to raid. More to the point, they did not want to risk seeing a sunsnake destroy the entire Romulan population at once.

Why did the Jindarians seem to ignore the Andromedans rather than fighting them tooth and nail?

Because the Jindarians pretty much ignore everybody who isn't actually attacking a specific caravan or competing for the same asteroid field. Remember that there is no overall Jindarian government, and thus no overall Jindarian policy about anything. The Jindarians were not trying to fight against the Andromedan invasion, so the Andromedans had no reason to go pick a fight with them, at least not except in individual cases where a specific asteroid field was particularly valuable to the Andromedans.

Why did the Orion Pirates never establish a cartel capital based in the Hydran Kingdom?

Because you do not understand what an "Orion cartel capital" is. Indeed, the entire concept of "Orion cartel capitals" is nebulous at best. No cartel had anything like a real, permanent capital (shipyard, government buildings, national archives, museums, monuments to great battles or fallen heroes, etc.) as the local empire would find it and destroy it. Their "capitals" were "distributed" across many systems over their entire area (and moved frequently), and any cartel which had territory in Hydran space had part of their "distributed capitals" in Hydran space.

GAME DESIGN

Q: Why is every weapon the same size? Why don't you have really supersize weapons like a four-box heavy disruptor?

A: Because there is no need for it and one standard size actually works better tactically and rules wise. We know; we tested it. You get better odds with multiple shots; can fire, reload, and repair them one at a time; and you have the flexibility to hit multiple targets. And it makes more engineering sense to have four 16" guns on your battleship than one 28" gun. We actually did a rule for light and heavy photons but nobody was interested.

Why do the Romulans get dumped on by the *SFU* all the time? We start with "the Klingons were about to conquer them but the Tholians accidentally saved them." Later, the Gorns "could have conquered them but felt guilty about the Paravians and didn't." During the General War, one of their capitals gets devastated, then they end with the Civil War. New players coming into the game find this jarring.

Because they don't. The television show says they were sublight until the Klingons helped them, so that's a given from TOS. Having the Tholians and Paravians accidentally save them from conquest is surely good luck not bad treatment. Remus is devastated, but so are the Hydran and Kzinti capitals. They have a civil war, but so do the Kzintis. The Romulans also get the coolest technology (cloaks) and the biggest weapons (plasma S and R). The only solution to this "mistreatment of the Romulans" is to change what happened on the television show, something you know we cannot do and that new players would find impossibly jarring.

SHIP DESIGN

Why do gunboats (PFs) have to pay for the plasma-sabot refit while X-ships do not? The refit appears in Y180, and (at least for plasma-armed empires) both gunboats and X-ships appear after that.

Because sabots are part of X-ship technology, while the sabots on gunboats are not X-tech and as such are a refit added only in specific cases. Most gunboats had too short a life expectancy to put it to much use — and it cost money.

Why did the WYN (who kitbash no end of captured ships) not kitbash their own fish ships or Orion ships?

Because they had too few of the fish ships and built them for operations outside of the WYN Cluster. As those factory unauthorized refits would constantly break down, these "kitbash" ships (as you call them) can only be used close to home. They had plenty of freighter hulls to use for that. As for Orion ships, the very design of such ships makes that kind of over-engineered refit impractical.

Why don't the fleets build "reserve power ships" with lots of batteries (sort of a mauler ship without the mauler weapon). Such ships would be cool to use in various cases, such as pushing through minefields or capturing enemy ships with tractor beams, the things maulers do already.

Because such ships would be over-specialized and spend too much time doing nothing. The technology of the huge reserve power systems works only with the mauler's power conduits to move it around.

TEN QUESTIONS

About *Captain's Log*

1. How long does it take to do a *Captain's Log*?

Six months, although not all of that time is spent just on the issue. We begin accumulating articles as we finish the previous issue, and (in theory at least) every month we're supposed to get at least a dozen more pages ready. (During that time, we work on other projects.) Of course, some articles are prepared just because they look interesting and may spend years in the file before we decide to use them.

The "graded" sections (Tactical Notes, Term Papers, Command Notes, Call-Out Notes, Assault Notes, Conquest Notes, etc.) are done about two months in advance as the graders need two or three weeks to complete their work.

In theory, the main piece of fiction is done as soon as it can be. Sometimes we have fiction done and waiting, and sometimes the issue is delayed while Steve Cole creates new fiction to order (something he really hates doing as creativity must flow instead of being squeezed). The snapshots are done from time to time whenever a good idea for one presents itself, usually more or less by accident although sometimes one of them is written deliberately for a specific purpose.

Then there is the two-week "goal line charge" at the end. (With *CL#45* we went to a three-week schedule, finishing the issue in the first two but allowing more time for Jean Sexton to proofread it, for artists to send in art, and for final checks and details.) During those two weeks, we do page layout on any material accumulated, and create whatever we don't have.

What we really need to do is talk with each department head months early about what they're going to do. (For example, is there really any reason why the *F&E* staff could not be set to the task of doing the playtest rule or the scenario for next issue five months before the goal line charge begins? Well, other than Steve Cole would have to remember to nudge them every month to make sure they didn't procrastinate.)

2. Why don't you do more than two per year?

We want to release a new product for every product line every year in order to keep the lines alive and fresh. We don't always succeed in that goal, but doing a third *Captain's Log* in a given year means, literally, not doing some other product for some other product line.

3. Why did you go to 144 pages and a higher price?

With more product lines, we needed more space to provide coverage for each of them without crowding the others. With more pages, we had to charge an appropriate price or lose money.

4. I know that many issues are delayed by a lack of fiction. Does each issue have to have fiction?

We've never done an issue without fiction, and we frankly don't think we could. Fiction has always been a central element of every issue. It sets the mood, gets people thinking, provides interest and entertainment, and helps to better explain the universe to new and veteran players.

5. How do you pick which tactical papers to print?

We have the papers for each game system checked by a panel of five graders for that game system. The papers with the highest ratings get printed, papers with low scores get sent back, and approved but unused papers are filed for the next issue. (Papers might be unused for lack of space or because of the rule that each player can only have one paper per issue on any one game.) The grades of leftover papers are recorded and these approved but unused papers are in the mix for the next issue.

6. Why do you print fewer tactics papers now than you did only four or five years ago?

After the Interregnum, we had a multi-year backlog of unpublished papers and every issue went to press with extra pages of papers and we still had dozens of approved papers left over. That backlog has now been published and we're using papers at the rate they come in. If more came in, we would print more.

7. Who earns a free copy? How do I earn one?

There are three groups of people who get freebies.

First, staffers who work on a lot of projects (many not related to *Captain's Log*) all during the year. They mostly need the issue in order to have a complete universe database to refer to.

Second, anyone who does a major bit of work on the issue itself, such as art or an article that is at least a page long.

A third (very small) group is tournament judges, who are sent a free copy for their hard work.

Some things that people write or send in don't rate a free issue, such as: tactical papers, people whose questions go into the Q&A or "Why" pages, things re-used from elsewhere (clip art), authors of *FC* scenarios that Steven P. Petrick converts into *SFB* scenarios, people whose idea went into the Proposals Board, and battle group authors. (They get awards on the Wall of Honor.)

8. Why doesn't each issue include a "coming in the next issue" list like many magazines?

Because we never know what will be in it, and we have a bad record of predicting the date we will finish things we haven't started working on. A billion-dollar glossy New York magazine prints fewer actual words with 10 times the full-time staff.

Even if we did know what we planned to do in the next issue, we don't want to lock ourselves into something and be forced to set aside an even better idea that comes up.

9. What is your favorite part of the issue?

Well, for Steve Cole the answer is "fiction someone other than me wrote" because he hates getting stuck as the fiction writer of last resort. His favorite part to write is *Brothers of the Anarchist*. The so-called "easy pages" (Why, Background Questions, Proposals Board), are always something he grabs early in the creation process because they put "points on the board" and get him farther ahead of Jean's hungry proofreading monster.

If you judge by which one he does first, surely Steven P. Petrick's favorite part is the Monster Special Rules article, which he launched many years ago. Finding something new to say about each monster is challenging, but he always meets it head on.

10. What is the FLAP list?

FLAP means "Finish Like A Pro" and refers to the concept of getting everything involved in the issue done, including things that are done *after* the issue goes to press. This includes a whole host of things, such as doing the large print edition, doing the Supplemental File, posting certain pages to the website, updating the industry databases that all retailers and wholesalers use, updating the Index of *Captain's Log*, putting the issue on the shopping cart with a proper description, figuring out who gets paid and who gets free copies, updating the *FC* Master Ship Chart and scenario index, updating the *F&E* SITs, posting the list of published tactical papers, updating the website's product schedule page, filing copyright paperwork, and a few other things.

We insist on doing the FLAP list in the week after the product is released because otherwise it gets forgotten (or gets too hard to do as memory of specific things begins to fade). We always have too much to do, and people who hear that we just sent the issue to press begin asking us for quick action on numerous other projects that were on hold during the final three weeks of work. We hope people realize that any given project isn't really "over" until a week or two after it has "gone to press."

INPUT GUIDE

“Interesting” Punctuation and Words

In reading our forums and proofreading for this issue of *Captain's Log*, some consistent problems showed up. I'd like to review those with you.

TO COMMA OR NOT TO COMMA

Commas and semicolons continue to prove a challenge. Steve Cole keeps telling me that he puts in commas where he breathes and I tell him that he is breathing too frequently. Just as assigning damage to a ship has rules, so does adding commas to written text.

If you are combining two sentences with “and,” then you don't need a comma. If you have a series of sentences and the last one starts with “and,” then you do use commas (unless any sentence contains a comma within it) since you have a list of sentences.

Ted fired his phasers and Paul reinforced his shields.

The Feds fired everything at the Orion, the Orion fired at the Klingons, and the Klingons shot at the Feds.

If you combine those two sentences and don't use “and,” then you need to use a semicolon. In fact, you can combine a lot of sentences with semicolons (although they should be closely related) and not use “and” in front of the last one.

Paul fired his phasers; Ted reinforced his shields.

Steve Cole worked on *Communique*, *Hailing Frequencies*, and *Captain's Log*; Steven Petrick worked on SSDs and tactical papers; Jean proofread everything.

In the last sentence above, even if it ended with “and Jean proofread everything,” you would need to use semicolons because one of the sentences has commas within it.

Once upon a time, when writing was a laborious process and the writer wanted to be absolutely clear, a comma was used after introductory phrases. In the modern world, extra keystrokes equal time and time means money. Therefore commas are frequently omitted after words such as “therefore” and “however.” ADB moves with the currents of language usage and has decided to go with this change. (It is a struggle, as Steve Cole is old enough that he learned the old way. Can I teach an old dog new tricks? Well, I can try.)

The final thing to remember about commas is that ADB uses the “serial comma” (also known as the Oxford comma). That means in a list of things, we use a comma before “and” or “or.”

Tony said, “I can't decide which ship to blow up: the Rhino Hunter, the Lion Hunter, or the Buffalo Hunter.”

Jean likes cats, dogs, and snow.

Without serial commas, some sentences become confusing, and others change the meaning entirely.

Mike declared, “I'm attacking my foes, the Hydrans and the Federation.”

Is Mike attacking three empires (or more) or just two?

Our good friend Steve Jackson loves this example:

I'd like to thank my parents, God and L. Ron Hubbard.

Note how the lack of a comma after “God” completely changes that entire sentence?

CONFUSING WORD PAIRS

Now let's explore some more commonly confused word pairs.

Rogue/rouge: A rogue is someone who is unreliable but it can also be used to describe something that is unpredictable or

operating outside of its parameters. “Rouge” is another word for “red” or a type of makeup. They are not interchangeable. Each time I read “He went rouge,” I wonder what made him turn red.

The rouge-painted Orion ship suddenly attacked the blue Orion ship that it was flying alongside of. “Watch out! He's gone rogue!” exclaimed the captain of the attacked ship.

The Orion slave girl smiled roguishly as she applied her green rouge. “This'll be a night you'll never forget.”

Canon/cannon: A canon is an established knowledgebase or set of rules. A cannon is a weapon. (Now, these days a “cannon” is any kind of artillery such as a “gun” or a “howitzer.” In the Elizabethan era, “cannon” was only one kind of ball-throwing artillery piece, but it turned out that it was the perfect ratio of length to diameter and all of the other terms disappeared. That's a pity, as “dragonette” was a cute name for a cannon.)

Part of the *SFU* canon is that our Kzintis do not have batwing ears.

Ketrick marched out with a heavy support disruptor. “Who let him out with that cannon?” whispered a young ensign.

MISUSED SLANG

Some *Star Fleet Universe* players have gotten into the habit of using shorthand terms (from *SFBOL* chatrooms) in formal writing. Please don't. Here's a quick review.

“Internal” is an adjective. It describes a noun such as “damage” or “medicine.” It is not a noun. Your ship does not take “internals” – there is no such word. A captain on a ship wouldn't talk about giving or taking internals. He'd talk about internal damage or the opposing ship being more fragile than his.

“With good shooting, we'll damage them severely,” not “we'll give them internals.”

“My ship took lots of points of internal damage during that round,” not “I took a lot of internals.”

F&E players constantly use “direct on” when they mean “attack with directed damage.”

Far too many players fire “a standard” but some of them fired a phaser-1, some fired a non-overloaded disruptor, and others launched a type-I drone. All are “standard” weapons to somebody out there in space, but ADB doesn't know which!

When you use slang, either a Steve has to catch it and fix it or I catch it and tell a Steve to fix it. Either way, Leanna and I end up with a grumpy Steve. A grumpy Steve is liable to remember “This guy uses slang” the next time he has to decide which article comes out of the file and goes into the issue. You're only hurting yourself when you do it wrong!

This and That

One way you can make a Steve's life easier is to use the numbering protocol that ADB uses. If you are writing a tactical paper or an article and want a numbered list, then please use a number and a period.

GOOD	BAD	BAD	BAD
1.	1)	1-	1:
2.	2)	2-	2:
3.	3)	3-	3:

Using closing parentheses, pound signs, letters (large or small), or nothing at all means that a Steve must fix it. Even if you don't care that a Steve gets grumpy, then remember that while a Steve is fixing a mistake, he isn't designing games.

I hope each of you takes this knowledge and goes forth to write the most excellent tactical papers and “Victory at” articles ever. We could just use a little help increasing the efficiency with which they get published. More than a few players have commented that being encouraged to use formal English when writing for the *SFU* has yielded rewards when they wrote a real world work memo and impressed their boss with the lack of jargon and imponderable shorthand.



COMMUNIQUE

IN THIS ISSUE

Anthony Cutcliff details tractor beam tactics.

The second *Battle Group Commander* feature sends our intrepid squadrons into dangerous terrain.

We have two exciting new scenarios.

We have four interesting new war destroyer leaders.

FEDERATION COMMANDER on e23

The *Federation Commander Reference Rulebook* remains one of the most popular downloads on the e23 website. The way the website works, you get any updates for free, so everyone who bought the first PDF rulebook (Revision Five) got to download the new Revision Six rulebook for free. (At some point, we'll have to make a future upload a "new edition" because of added material from expansions and the sheer work of updates. Until then, any typos or rules glitches we find get fixed for free!)

We have continued to upload other new materials for *Federation Commander* to the e23 PDF download site.

All of our e23 items are full-color in high resolution, allowing you to zoom in to a sharp image and print your own copies.

If you have any suggestions for things we could upload to e23, do let us know. The players of our other product lines have made such suggestions and have seen them acted on, such as the *F&E Chart Book*, *Galactic Conquest Rulebook*, and *Dread Pirate Aldo* for *Prime Directive*. We cannot always upload everything you want (and things that have to be created may take a while to do) but we do listen and do what we can.

Many players new to the *Star Fleet Universe* have enjoyed the 20-year-old issues of *Captain's Log* we have uploaded.

COMING NEXT YEAR

Work continues on previously announced new products:

- *Reinforcements Attack* was voted as the product *you, the players*, most wanted to see, and it will be in stores at the same time as this issue. We are still working on *Borders of Madness #1* and other projects before picking the main 2013 product.
- The *Reference Scenario Book* is being worked on for re-release sometime in 2013.
- Pat Doyle is writing the *FC Tactics Manual*.
- *Briefing #3* with its "support units" needed for *Federation Admiral* continues progress toward release.
- We plan to move forward with "attack series" products covering carriers and X-ships for later release.

COMMUNIQUE

Communique continues to appear monthly with new ships and scenarios. We've even been on time, *all of the time!*

• **Communique #79:** Scenario 8CM66 The Mothball Mutiny, revised Neo-Tholian destroyer, large format Death Probe, new Klingon D7W heavy command cruiser, and new Federation heavy war destroyer escort.

• **Communique #80:** Scenario 8CM67 Operation Eagle Assault, revised Orion Pirate Battle Raider, large format planetary defense monitor, new Seltorian light cruiser scout, and new Federation escort light cruiser.

• **Communique #81:** Scenario 8CM68 Asteroid Station Zebra, revised Hydran Knight DD, new ships (ISC destroyer-scout,

Frax war destroyer scout, Klingon F6E battle escort).

• **Communique #82:** Scenario 8CM69 The Battle of Vandha, revised Andromedan Cobra, New Lyran CV and DWE, large format Klingon BT7.

• **Communique #83:** Scenario 8CM70 Raider's Ball, revised Lyran DD, New Tholian DE, Andromedan Eel, large format Romulan RegalHawk.

• **Communique #84:** Scenario 8CM71 Santa and the Monster, revised ISC CL, New Vudar DWL, New Hydran DWE, large format Klingon frigate squadron.

• **Communique #85:** Scenario 8CM72 The Hunting of the Snark, revised Vudar CW, large format Frax DN, new Federation New Commando Transport, new Frax DWE escort.

All of the *Communiques* are available free on the website.

WE ARE HERE FOR YOU!

We continue to provide the best customer service around. You can get your rules questions answered, talk to customer service, order new products, find a store that carries our products, and discuss tactics with other players. You can even play *Federation Commander* online in real time against live opponents, or you can play it by email.

Federation Commander would be impossible without the staff, including Department Head Mike West; proofreader Jean Sexton; expert playtesters Scott Moellmer, Tony L. Thomas, Mike Curtis, Mike Filsinger, and Art Trotman.

FEDERATION COMMANDER: REINFORCEMENTS ATTACK

This product was delayed by the die-cut counters, but will be released on the same day as this issue of *Captain's Log*. (As these words are written, 22 Dec 2012, the counters are here, the cover and cards are ready to go to press, and Jean is proofreading the rulebook.) So the 2012 product was delayed into 2013, but that doesn't mean you won't get a 2013 product.

What will it be?

BORDER OF MADNESS

This was the half-humorous title for a product containing "all of the *SFB* rules we left out of *Federation Commander*."

The problem, at this point, is that a serious analysis has found very few of those rules that need to come into *FC* at all, even through *Borders of Madness*. Well, maybe some.

Carriers and fighters are the big one. The problem there is keeping the counter count down. Fighters tend to launch hordes of drones, and *FC* players have made it clear that they don't want that. Seeking weapons exist primarily to force the enemy to move and converting the fighters into direct-fire platforms loses that, but testing of three alternatives goes on (direct-fire, instant drone resolution, pack-o'-drone counters).

Escorts have already made it into *FC* without problem.

Gunboats are a possibility, but a big enough subject to need their own volume of *Borders of Madness*.

Maulers and commando ships are easy enough we may put them into a "real" *FC* product. Scouts are already in *FC* in a format that *FC* players can deal with, so why worry about that?

Do we really need legendary officers and elite crews?

Nobody in *SFB* uses some of the advanced rules (e.g., Energy Balance due to Damage) and other *SFB* rules are pointless given the nature of *FC* (e.g., mid-turn speed changes).

Evaluation of the options continues.

COMMAND NOTES

SPECIAL SENSOR TACTICS

— Cadet Paul Williamson, *USS Florida*

Special sensors can be important systems for your fleet.

On defense, use them only in serious cases.

1. Examine the enemy's weapons, because sensors impact some empires more than others. The ISC's plasmatic pulsars suffer only minor degradation but the Federation's vaunted photon torpedoes are devastated by a die roll shift. Phasers firing from a distance also suffer.

2. Don't use the sensors against enemy drones until the last impulse, and even then, only if you're desperate. Ships have phasers and tractor beams to deal with the pesky drones.

3. Protect the ships you need the most, that is, ships with key weapons or scenario-winning systems. If the scenario is won by landing Marines on a planet, protect the commando ship.

4. Don't waste sensors against plasma-Fs; save them for use against the plasma-S and plasma-R torpedoes.

On offense, the choice of when to use a sensor is even more critical and requires careful thought.

1. Throwing all your eggs into one impulse basket against a fleet with a scout is inviting him to use the sensors to protect that target. Fire weapons over several impulses and against multiple ships. The only empire that will have enough sensors will be a Federation fleet or an opponent with a base. Any other empire can only protect four ships or reduce four plasma torpedoes.

2. Consider reducing your opponent's die rolls when you have multiple seeking weapons striking that turn.

3. Target the scout with seeking weapons to force it to maneuver. Ships more than 12 hexes from the scout cannot receive its help, so make them work to keep their formation.

4. At the end of an early turn, when the fleets still have some distance, shoot at the scout. Any shield damage might force the scout ship to stay back and be more cautious.

This paper was rated the best Command Note of this issue of Captain's Log.

SPIKE THE GUNNERS

— Captain Terry O'Carroll, *HMAS New South Wales*

One way to mission-kill a small ground weapon base is to attack the weapon box with a Marine raid after knocking down the shield. When doing this, raid the base's "bridge" box as well. The base has only one control box, so if you disable the bridge, the base will be uncontrolled and suffer a penalty on to-hit rolls [rule (5A2b)] until it is repaired.

THE SHIELD BALLET

— Lieutenant Commander Tony L. Thomas, *USS Tennessee*

One of the most often overlooked rules (especially by those more familiar with *Star Fleet Battles*) is (3C3b) shield transfer, or as the members of Battlegroup Murfreesboro refer to it: the shield ballet. This rule allows you to rotate five undamaged boxes from one shield to an adjacent shield. True, five boxes does not sound like a lot, but it can be the difference between life and death.

For Klingons performing the saber dance, use of this rule can turn the saber dance into a work of art. By steadily rotating fresh boxes onto the facing shield during your oblique approaches, you can keep a stronger shield towards your opponent.

If you do lose a shield, do not panic; do the shield ballet. A disabled shield cannot be reinforced to reduce incoming damage, but a five-box shield can be. Sometimes, the difference between no reinforcement and five shield boxes plus batteries may be enough to save your ship (or a key weapon) for another turn. Or in a worst-case scenario, the shield ballet may allow it to survive long enough to disengage, thereby denying your opponent the victory points accrued by destroying a ship.

SHIELD CRACKER'S OTHER HALF

— Commander Mike West, *USS Texas*

Any examination of the efficacy of shield crackers without considering Marines is only looking at half of the story. Seltorian ships are built with significant numbers of transporters and entire colonies of Marines.

Use them.

The whole "historical point" of the shield crackers was to be able to board and capture ships intact. (The Tholians were businessmen and wanted to get back stolen resources, not destroy them.) Seltorians have more Marines than anyone-else and plenty of transporters. Either perform hit-and-run raids (if you can't capture the ship), or perform boarding actions (if you think you can capture the ship).

To capture an enemy ship during a duel, remember that you only need to have some of your Marines survive the first turn. The idea is to build up enough numbers so that by the third turn you outnumber the enemy ship's Marines and you will eventually capture the ship. Shield crackers help you do this.

In a squadron scenario, you should be able to just flat-out capture enemy ships in one shot. A Seltorian task force of a light cruiser and a pair of destroyers (or frigates) will have 14 transporters (seven in Fleet Scale, against smaller targets), which will allow you to send over enough Marines to overwhelm most opposing cruisers, and at least challenge the Klingons and Gorns. Do it a second time and the ship is yours.

CLOSING THE GAP

— Lt Commander Anthony Cutcliffe, *HMS Devonshire*

When fighting in an asteroid field with web caster-equipped Tholian ships, look for opportunities to trap an unwary opponent in the gap between two asteroid hexes.

Here's how it works. Since ships tend to avoid asteroid damage by staying out of asteroid hexes and remaining in clear space, the enemy will often fly through single-hex gaps between the asteroids.

If your opponent finishes his movement in such a gap, you can exploit this with your web caster. Throw a three-hex web of 16 strength points per hex (at up to ten hexes' range), anchoring the ends in the asteroid hexes to either side, with the middle web hex in the same hex as the enemy ship. This will trap the enemy ship immediately, and at worst will ruin his plans for the turn. At best it may well trap him for long enough for you to hit him with a seeking weapon or two. Since Tholians are not big on seeking weapons, this trick is best performed when fighting alongside allied ships that do have such weapons, such as the Gorns. A web hex forms a perfect anchor situation and makes the enemy ship a sitting target for plasma/drone strikes from hexes off to the side of the web strand. The trick still works with larger gaps of course, but it will not slow your opponent as much.

The counter tactic to this is to avoid single-hex gaps. Use maneuver, speed, and acceleration/deceleration to make sure that you finish the movement sub-pulses a hex or two away from such gaps, and then dash forward to clear the gap in a single impulse. This works because the web caster can only fire after movement is completed for that impulse. If your ship has already been trapped in a web, or has just broken out of it, it can sometimes even be worth decelerating upon release in order to avoid a similar gap and being trapped again. Then move forward in a burst of speed as above.

As this is taking place in an asteroid field, you will need to maneuver carefully to avoid entering asteroid hexes at the sorts of speeds required to break out of webs of that strength; unfortunately these are also the same speeds required to avoid those gaps in the first place. Still, the increased speed will likely give you the initiative, since the Tholians will not necessarily want to be moving at that speed in an asteroid field either — and it can also put your ships into some interesting attacking positions!



General News

The *Federation Commander* Online community continues to flourish as more ships and improved software are added.

The Fall 2012 *Federation Commander* Online Tournament is currently in Round 3.

The Winter 2012 *Federation Commander* Online Tournament was won by Lee Storey and Eric Penick.

Client News

Many fixes and additions have been made to the client, including the fixing of the launching of plasma torpedoes by using an "Add Piece" window.

NEW SHIPS WAR DESTROYER LEADERS

This issue brings you four exciting new ships for *Federation Commander*: the first war destroyer leaders. (This type might be in a future product, *Flagships Attack*, with the war cruiser leaders and the heavy command cruisers.)

The selection of which four ships to print may seem almost random. That's because it is. Almost every empire built a war destroyer leader or destroyer leader and we simply did the first four we found in the stack of SSDs requested for conversion by you, the players.

ROMULAN SKYHAWK-L DESTROYER LEADER

The Romulans found that there was no practicable way to add the systems needed for a "leader" to a SkyHawk by way of an interchangeable module. (The module for the SkyHawk-A combat variant was about as good as the module could get.)

Federation Commander does not account for this modular system at this time, but some variants may appear later.

Accepting this, they hard-welded a combat module and set about modifying the hull itself. They replaced the probe launcher with a plasma-G torpedo and improved the command facilities. The resulting ship was an important addition to the fleet.

HYDRAN LION-HUNTER WAR DESTROYER LEADER

As with other Hydran "command" ships this design mounted fighters, hellbores, and fusion beams along with other improvements, such as heavier shields. The Hydrans, like everyone else, would have made this their standard DW if it had been possible.

LYRAN ALLEYCAT-L WAR DESTROYER LEADER

The improvements to the Lyran war destroyer to produce a leader variant consisted of stronger shields, upgrading some phaser-2s to phaser-1s, and adding some power.

ISC DESTROYER LEADER

Normally the most powerful ship in an ISC fleet's gunline, the destroyer leader had improved shields, upgraded torpedoes (plasma-G instead of plasma-F), and more power. This ship was always at the center of the gunline.



by Frank Brooks

If you are a fan of *Federation Commander* but do not:

1. have a local gaming group,
2. have time to play an entire game in one sitting,
3. want to leave the house to play people in other locations,
4. need an excuse to play more *Federation Commander*,

then play-by-email is what you need.

Playing *Federation Commander* by email is an alternative to playing face-to-face. While there are a few differences (i.e., your opponent isn't sitting across the table), it is the same game.

The basic gist of the *Federation Commander* Play by Email (PBEM) system is that you and your opponent submit your orders for the turn to a moderator via email. The moderator then processes them, and sends a "SitRep" (Situation Report) to the players via email. You receive the results, write up your next set of orders, and then submit your orders once again. The process is repeated until the game is completed. Sounds simple? That's because it *is*! It'll take a little getting used to (after all, what doesn't?), but once you've got the hang of it, you'll be lobbing photon torpedoes (or whatever your weapon of choice is) at opponents from all over the world.

Every *Federation Commander* PBEM game has at least three participants: two or more players and one moderator. The moderator's purpose is to accept orders from the players and carry them out, reporting the results of those orders to all players. While he is not a player, the moderator fulfills a very important role in the game. Good moderators and good players make for a good, enjoyable game of *Federation Commander*. Moderating a *Federation Commander* PBEM game is also an excellent way to learn more about the *Federation Commander* rules, and (if you moderate a few games) you earn the unique Order of Moderation, one of the coolest medals on the Wall of Honor.

While there are some disadvantages to PBEM (it does take longer to finish a game), there are advantages as well. You can play against people in other parts of the world (how often do you get to Australia anyway?), you can play multiple games at once, and you can have large multi-player games (without worrying about running out of chips and soda).

This system is basically the same thing as the *SFB* PBEM system (for those who have used it). Yes, I copied it. Why not? The *SFB* system works just fine. If you are at all familiar with the *SFB* system, you'll have no problems at all with the *FC* one. If you're new to the whole PBEM experience, welcome. You'll find it's pretty easy to pick up.

The rules and procedures are in the PBEM section of the website (starfleetgames.com/pbemgames). There are topics in the *SFB* PBEM and *FC* PBEM portions of the BBS for finding opponents and moderators.

UPDATE ON PBEM CAMPAIGNS

Escalation: Unfortunately real life decided to rear its ugly head and prevented this campaign from advancing since the last update in *Captain's Log #44*. The campaign is still in the quarter-final rounds. However, now that the holidays and their associated madness are over, this campaign should start moving again.

Star Your Own: Anyone can organize their own *Federation Commander* PBEM campaign and have it written up in *Captain's Log*. Start yours today!

"USE YOUR TRACTORS, DAMMIT!"

(Sign over the doors to the simulator at Star Fleet Academy)

by Lt Commander Anthony Cutcliffe, HMS Devonshire

Tractors are the most under-utilized weapon on the ship. Many of the uses of the tractor beam are buried in the rules, and not all players will have realized just how flexible the system can be. Here then is a collection of current uses and tactics for the tractor beam; the idea is to raise the profile of this important system and to make players aware of its possibilities. It's not just what you can do with your tractors, but what your opponent can do to you with his. Setting aside the more mundane uses of tractors for towing ships in distress, retrieving objects, and other mission-specific tasks, we will concentrate on the use of tractors in the cauldron of ship-to-ship combat.

DEFENSE AGAINST SEEKING WEAPONS

First and foremost, you can use tractor beams to grab drones or suicide shuttles, even those that have already impacted your ship during the movement sub-pulses. It can also be done during the Other Functions Phase against a seeking weapon within one-hex range. This could even be a seeking weapon that is targeted on another ship in your fleet, not just on the tractorship. That said, there are times when using the tractor beam is not always the best immediate option, and you can save a point of energy per tractor beam if you use these tricks.

At the start of a turn, if you have any tractors holding seeking weapons, you can safely, but possibly temporarily, drop the tractors holding those weapons; the Sequence of Play specifically allows this [Rule (5D4c)]. Remember that since the seeking weapon impacts at the end of the Defensive Fire Phase of the first impulse, the released weapons will therefore have to go through the Defensive Fire Phase of the following impulse again. If any survive that, you can still re-attach a tractor beam. Remember that transporters are operated before tractor beams. This means that if a tractor holding a seeking weapon is destroyed by a hit-and-run raid, you can grab that weapon again using a different tractor beam (if one is available, and you have power available) in the immediately following Other Functions Phase.

A seeking weapon held in a tractor beam that becomes disabled is treated under the same procedure as a seeking weapon released from a tractor beam over a turn break, giving you the same opportunities to shoot it down.

DEATH DRAGGING

This is concept from *Star Fleet Battles*. The idea is that a shuttle (regular or suicide) which is tractoried above Speed 16 (32, 24+1, 24, or 16+1) is destroyed during the second movement sub-pulse. This will even happen if the shuttle is a suicide shuttle that has impacted its target but has been caught in a defensive tractor in the Defensive Fire Phase, which is worth remembering! This means that you can destroy a Stinger or shuttle simply by attaching a tractor for one point of power, and then moving at the required speed. Of course, getting that close to a Stinger may not be a good idea, but if it has already fired its weapons or was just launched, you should be fine.

SUICIDE FREIGHTERS

You can't use your tractors at all when defending a base against an already impacted suicide freighter; they are not subject to the normal Defensive Fire Phase options as drones or suicide shuttles are. The rulebook explicitly states that you can only tractor a suicide freighter at Range 1. It is unlikely that the freighter will finish its movement at that range. A competent attacking player will use accelerations or decelerations as necessary, to make sure that Range 1 is avoided if at all possible.

Alternatively, these two means of tractoring the freighter can sometimes be combined by using a friendly ship to tractor the freighter and drag it into Range 1, where the base can take over. In order to do this, though, the tractoring ship will need to have expended more energy on movement so that it controls the movement of the linked pair, unless the slowing effect of the linked ships just happens to bring the freighter to the correct range!

CONTROLLING MOVEMENT

The ship that has spent the most power on movement controls the movement of a linked pair of ships, no matter who controls the actual tractor link. If you control the movement, your ship is still free to maneuver. One offshoot of this is that you can still turn to bring different shields and weapons to bear, and you can decide where the linked ships will move. If the tractor link is maintained, your opponent cannot control the movement of the ships at all, and can only change his ship's facing in two ways. He can either perform a high energy turn or he can perform an emergency deceleration followed by a tactical maneuver. Either way, your options are less limited than his and you may be able to damage the enemy ship even further by moving it into dangerous places such as dragging the enemy through asteroids. You can tractor an enemy ship to one side of your ship and move so that he is dragged through any available asteroid hexes, while you are safely outside those hexes. The enemy ship will take damage based on its speed as it passes through the asteroids.

You could also use a tractor beam to push the enemy ship through a group of previously launched suicide shuttles. If the suicide shuttles are close to the fight, then tractoring an enemy becomes a major threat. Launch a suicide shuttle early in the game and look for opportunities to push the enemy into it later.

PREVENTING EVASIVE MANEUVERS

If a ship is held in a tractor beam, it cannot perform evasive maneuvers. This is one case where even a small ship tractoring a larger one can cause difficulty for its target. Perhaps the small ship's buddies are coming up with loaded direct-fire weapons or a swarm of drones are close to impacting. You get the idea.

SMALL SHIP VERSUS LARGE SHIP

Just because you are in a frigate and up against a heavy battle cruiser does not necessarily mean that you cannot tractor a larger enemy. Granted this will take a lot of guts, but tractoring a larger ship will still slow him down, and it may have further benefits too. The larger (now slower) ship will be easier to catch with seeking weapons, and if by chance the larger ship has spent little power on movement, the frigate may even be able to move the large ship where the frigate wants it to go.

CANCELLING THE CLOAKING DEVICE

You can't attach a new tractor to a ship that is under cloak, but if you can grab him in a tractor before he gets the chance to cloak, then the cloak will not help him and he would therefore not want to cloak. Stick close to a cloaked ship, because if the ship voids his cloak you want to be in a position to grab him in a tractor before his cloak becomes effective again. Watch for these opportunities near dust clouds, asteroids, and webs. Also watch for him going too fast or using evasive maneuvers, both of which will void his cloak. People make mistakes; with your tractor beam you can capitalize on those mistakes!

SLOWING DOWN FRIENDLY SHIPS

In certain situations, it may be a good idea to tractor a friendly ship in order to obtain cheap deceleration; after all, it only costs one point of energy (in tractors) for both ships to lose speed in this fashion. You may want to do this because you want to slow the approach of your ships, then suddenly accelerate to a higher speed band by dropping the tractor beam. While this is an inter-

esting idea, it may not always be practical. There are three caveats with this trick that should always be borne in mind. First, the tractor beam friendly ship is under the same restrictions as any other tractor beam friendly ship would be; it can't turn if it doesn't control the movement and it can't go evasive. Secondly, you can only drop the tractor link in the Other Functions Phase. This means that if you do decide to use this trick, you are committed to it for at least the whole of the next impulse. Lastly, a friendly ship, held in a tractor beam, cannot fire offensively or launch seeking weapons.

THE TRACTOR BEAM POWER DRAIN

A tractor beam can be used to literally drain power from an enemy ship. Every point of power he has to use to fight the tractor beam is a point of power that he won't have later in the turn. No other system in the game can do this. Granted, you use as much power as he does, but this tactic should be used in situations where you can afford it more than he can. For instance, say you're near the end of the turn and you have excess power and he's keeping his last few points to fill his batteries for next turn. If you grab him, and there's a reason why he does not want to be grabbed, then he will need to burn the points he was hoping to save. Sure, you need to burn points as well, but you may still have points for next turn's batteries, giving you a slight power-superiority for the next turn. Or perhaps you're in a bigger ship but you've fired all your weapons; this gives you a chance to do damage later in the game by stealing some of his power now. Of course, this all depends on whether or not it's actually wise to tractor the opponent and on whether it actually matters to him to fight the tractor. As with all *Federation Commander* tactics, it depends on the current situation, but it is always worth considering. Maybe your ship can afford more power. Maybe you have a large ship that is passing a smaller enemy ship but for some reason you don't want to shoot at him right now. Every time you are within one hex of an opposing ship, consider using the tractor beam to drain power from the enemy.

STRATEGY OVER THE TURN BREAK

The new turn can signal a change in tractor strategy for both you and your opponent, where you both must re-evaluate the situation. Oftentimes, the captain of a ship being held in a tractor beam from the previous turn may wish simply to pile on the negative-tractor power in the auction in order to try to break his opponent's beam. There is, however, a more subtle approach. Instead of applying power to negative tractor, how about putting lots of power into movement. This occurs before the tractor auction in the Sequence of Play, so when the tractor auction occurs, your opponent may well not want to maintain the link if he does not also control the movement, and may therefore drop the beam. This trick works better if your ship has a higher movement cost than your opponent's; a Klingon F5 could spend 12 points of power on a speed of 24, against a Kzinti FF's maximum movement cost of a mere six points of power for the same speed. On release, your power will then be converted into something useful — speed — rather than simply negative tractor energy that just sits on your hull and does nothing beyond protecting you from further tractor attempts that turn.

Of course, whether or not he releases the beam depends on why he's tractoring you in the first place, but it is worth considering as an option if your opponent needs to maneuver; something he will not be able to do easily if you control the movement. If you are the one doing the tractoring, consider carefully whether or not you actually need to maintain the beam, and, if so, whether you need to control the movement, too. You will need to select your baseline speed carefully with these points in mind; the ensuing tractor auction will then be made with all speeds known, so you will know where you stand in this regard, and so will your opponent. Other key issues to consider at the start of the turn include: Do you want to avoid being tractorated? Do you even re-

ally need to avoid being tractorated? Do you want to tractor someone else? What about the arming status of heavy weapons, both yours and his? Give these ideas some thought and work out your power management strategy before plotting your base speed.

THOUGHTS ON THE ZERO-ENERGY ANCHOR

The "Zero-Energy Anchor" is a tactic whereby plasma torpedoes launched at one-hex range, against a ship moving at Speed 16+1 or less, will automatically hit their target before it can move away, without the launching ship having to spend power on a tractor beam. Alternatively, even a target moving at Speed 24 or 24+1 cannot escape the plasma torpedoes if they are launched at Range Zero. To take advantage of this, you need to end your movement so that:

1. your plasma torpedo launcher has the target in arc,
2. you are at one or zero hexes range, and
3. you are facing the weakest shield you can get to.

As an attacker, you can use a plasma-hack-and-slash attack whereby you damage or drop the enemy's facing shield with direct-fire weapons, then launch plasma torpedoes at the end of that same impulse. The torpedoes will then impact the ship on that weakened shield because of the "zero-energy anchor."

If you are the target ship for such an attack, you can still do something about that incoming fire: you can perform a high energy turn in order to bring a fresh shield to face your attacker. It is important to make sure that you save the power for this. If you are about to receive direct fire at one-hex range from an enemy ship that has a plasma torpedo he can launch the same impulse, you should save power for a high energy turn even at the expense of shield reinforcement. Keeping only a single point of power in order to perform an Emergency Deceleration followed by a Tactical Maneuver is not an option in this case as the plasma torpedo will impact before you can execute the maneuver. Also, and this is not often appreciated, if you can accelerate to Speed 24+1, then you may be able to escape, depending on the geometry of the launching ship's approach, unless he's at Range Zero of course. In this situation, a canny opponent can also threaten a tractor beam anchor if he has enough power; countering this beam could also eat into the power you are keeping for your high energy turn. The situation will dictate whether it is better to accept the tractor and still be able to perform the high energy turn, or avoid the tractor anchor. However, most of the time it would be better to keep the power for the high energy turn, because you will probably need it anyway if he anchors you.

CONCLUSION

While we should always regard with caution any tactics beginning with "If your opponent has fired all his weapons" (or has used all his energy), you do need to keep an eye out for this situation from both directions. Enemy ships that have used all their weapons and/or all their power may well be defenseless against tractor attempts, at least until the next turn. Conversely, avoid using all of your weapons and/or power in the vicinity of an enemy ship able to tractor you, because if he does, you in turn will be helpless until the start of the next turn.

Remember that if you release the tractor at the end of a turn, you will still be close to him at the start of the next turn. He will of course have a fresh bag of energy tokens to use, and at a minimum his phasers will be ready to fire again. It may be fair to say that at any and every point in a given turn, or indeed game, there will be a ship, or ships, which should be actively looking to tractor an opponent. Conversely there will also be a ship or ships that should avoid being tractorated at all costs.

The tractor beam can be that decisive so keep tractor beam considerations high on your list of priorities so as not to miss an opportunity — and so as not to be caught!

With thanks to Commodore Patrick J. Doyle for helpful suggestions and minor additions.

BATTLE GROUP HOSTILE TERRAIN

The basis of this battle group article is (8D2) The Duel, but with a major twist. The commanders were instructed to prepare a squadron not to exceed 500 points, but were not given any other information. None of the selected ships could have a movement cost greater than 1.0. In addition, no auxiliary ships could be used, including WYN auxiliary ships, and Tholian forces were limited to a maximum of one web caster.

Once the battle groups were prepared, they were paired off against each other, and the unique twist was revealed: Each pair would fight in a terrain setting unique to that pair. Only two battle groups are in the same type of specific terrain (a result of there being an odd number of submissions), and some face similar challenges. For example, one battle takes place near a pulsar (6E), while two others take place near a regular pulsar (6E1c). This did inevitably mean that some commanders found themselves with ships that (had they known they were going to fight in, or near, a particular kind of terrain) they would not have selected. This is in keeping with the “you fight the battle you must fight, not the battle you wanted to fight” flavor of recent battle group articles. Even so, an effort was made (not always successfully) not to assign forces to battles and terrain where they simply should not venture.

As the point of this battle group article is to deal with the terrain as well as the enemy, fixed maps were imposed so that the commanders could not simply “move the action away from the terrain feature” where that was nominally possible, such as in the case of a battle near a black hole.

The result is that we have six battles each under markedly different conditions.

Set up the map using the small hexes three panels across by two panels deep. The Player A force (the first of the two battle groups listed) starts in the upper left corner of the map (hex 0101, all ships in that hex in that map corner). The Player B force (the second of the two battle groups listed) starts in the lower right corner (hex 1415, all ships in that hex in that map corner). Player A's forces can only retreat off the left-hand edge of the open space map on which his forces begin. Player B's forces can only retreat off the right-hand edge of the open space map on which his forces begin.

The victory conditions imposed were to be the only force remaining on the map (if a commander had one undestroyed ship on the map and his opponent has none, he won).

In the case where the terrain required random die rolls, i.e., the variable pulsar, these were provided so that both commander's would be working under the same conditions.



MATCH #1: ON THE ROCKS

Terrain: Normal Asteroids (6B2b). The map panel on the upper right and the map panel on the lower left are open space. Use the *Romulan Attack* map panels on the upper row (four diamonds then the four oblongs) and the *Battleships Attack* panels on the lower row (triangle, then the really busy one).

CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

by Mike West, *USS Texas*

NCL *Reliant* (125) = 125.

NCL *Repluse* (125) = 125.

NCL *Retribution* (125) = 125.

NCL *Refuge* (125) = 125.

Total = 500.

The base tactic for a Federation force facing a plasma force is to keep our speed up (Baseline Speed 24), hit them with photon torpedoes at Range 4-8, rinse, and repeat. (Against the Gorns, Range 8 is preferable, as that eliminates their ability to use caronades.) The asteroid field, however, complicates this greatly, as any high-speed movement through an asteroid hex is punished heavily. In our case, that means taking up to 30 points of damage (the entire #1 shield of an NCL!) if the roll for asteroid damage is bad. Despite this, we will retain this basic approach. Ideally, we want to approach at high speed, get a clean shot at Range 8, and get away. To do this, we want to draw the Gorns into an engagement on the open maps, then flee to the asteroid maps to hide and reload.

During the approach, all ships will keep together in the same hex. Since many of the clear paths through the asteroids are a single hex wide, staying in the same hex means that our ships will keep together with no risk of one being out of position later. Only when reaching the point of fire will our ships fan out, creating two stacks of two ships in adjacent hexes. After firing, we will rejoin into a single hex to regain the squadron maneuverability. As damage is taken, this approach will have to be changed, but that will generally mean the damaged ship falling behind the others, while the undamaged ships stay in the same hex.

Both of the top asteroid maps are easily negotiable at high speeds with very little risk of taking asteroid damage. The map in the middle of the bottom can also be negotiated at high speed, but traps us into a pre-determined path the enemy can take advantage of. The map in the lower right is very dense and cannot be easily negotiated at high speeds. Fortunately, we start in the more easily negotiable maps, providing us with more flexibility in our initial movement, and allowing us to more naturally react to the enemy's choice of direction.

Any time we are more than one map away from the enemy, are on an asteroid map, and are not actively trying to engage, we can slow down to more properly rearm. Normally, against plasma-armed enemies, this is a bad idea. However, with the asteroids to cover us, it will be much harder for the enemy to cross a lot of hexes at high speed without taking asteroid damage. Besides, “slow down” in this case simply means we will be using Baseline Speed 16 instead of 24. We will not be using overloads very often, particularly after the first exchange, in order to maintain speed and flexibility. We will use this to our advantage by using directed targeting.

Given these generalities, our initial approach is to set Speed 16 on the first turn and overload as many photon torpedoes as possible. We will determine which open map the enemy is generally headed toward, and move in that direction. In either direction we can maintain speed and cleanly move through the open paths without any danger of taking asteroid damage. We will lure the enemy into an open map so that a clean Range-8 shot can be taken, then we will head back into the asteroids.

After the first exchange, we will attempt to do the same thing on subsequent attack runs. If we are forced to engage in an asteroid map, we will work to make sure our fire is through no more than three asteroid hexes so there is only a die roll shift of one. Also, we will endeavor to force the enemy to move through asteroid hexes if they want to get closer to us. The more asteroid damage they take, the less damage we have to do to them. We will generally be the pursued, so we will take advantage of that to make the enemy move in ways they do not want to in order to get their desired firing opportunity.

Finally, if one of our ships is going to get tractorred, we will try to make sure it happens in an asteroid field map. Since we are moving Speed 24, it is likely we will end up being the one controlling movement in a tractor situation. Even as the enemy hammers our tractorred ship with plasma torpedoes, we should be able to force the enemy ship into asteroid hexes and force it to take asteroid damage twice. While it will not even out the damage (most likely), it is a unique opportunity to make the enemy pay for performing an anchor.

GORN FIREBREATHER SQUADRON

by Fred Kreller, *USS Idaho*

- BCH *Forked Tongue* (192) = 192.
- CC *Iguana* (164) = 164.
- DD *Salamander* (91) = 91.
- FF *Gecko* (50) = 50.
- Total = 497.

We are facing a Federation force with 16 photons, but only four drone racks. We have a variety of plasma torpedoes at our disposal, but the terrain in this scenario is the key to our (and the enemy's) tactics.

The first tactic deals with our plasma torpedoes. We will not launch a torpedo when we know it will have to run through more than three asteroid hexes to reach its target. A good alternative can be to bolt the torpedo, even against a shift of plus three to the die roll. Also, we must be mindful to never get caught with all our plasma torpedo tubes empty, especially if the Federation commodore is cycling part of his photon torpedoes every turn.

The second tactic to keep in mind is our baseline speed. Anything above a baseline speed of 16 is a bad idea amongst all these asteroids, although with judicious maneuvers, some of the damage that would result from such a speed could be mitigated. We must keep in mind that the Federation commodore is going to know almost exactly where we are going if we try this. With the Federation having only four drone racks for us to worry about, there is no need to try and outrun their drones. Instead, we will save the energy from movement and use it to swat his drones with phasers or tractor them. Extra energy not spent on movement can also be used for shield reinforcement, weapons, or (with care) evasive maneuvers. (Remember that using evasive maneuvers in asteroids increases the damage a ship will take, but we will be very hard to hit.)

When the Federation has its photons armed at standard levels, we will do everything we can to give them a shift of plus three to their die rolls when they fire them. This means we will be using the asteroids as cover, and also using evasive maneuvers. We must also use our plasma torpedoes to affect their decisions to get within overload range, should their photon torpedoes be armed at those levels.

We have a bit of an edge over the Federation with our ships' ability to take damage and keep fighting. The Federation new light cruiser, while it packs a very good punch, cannot take a punch quite as well as our ships can. At knife-fighting range, it can be very effective to target weapons on the Federation ships. We can afford to stay at knife-fighting range a bit longer than they can, and if we can perform a Gorn anchor on one or more of

their ships, so much the better! Also, we must not forget the utility of the plasma carronade function at close range, especially if we do not have fully armed plasma-F torpedo tubes.

This is a very tough enemy, compounded by the terrain we are fighting in, but if we use the asteroids to our advantage, along with the durability of our ships, we have a good chance of defeating the Federation force.

MATCH #2: VARIABLES OF WAR

Terrain: Variable Pulsar (6E): All maps are open space. The pulsar is located in hex 0815 of the top center map (which it shares with the bottom center map).

Pulsar Burst die rolls for turns are: 1, 4, 3, 6, 2, 4, 4, 1, 5, 4, 1, 2, 6, 1, 3, 5, 4, 2, 2, 4.

Pulsar Burst die rolls for impulse (one has already been added in each case): 3, 6, 5, 2, 4, 6, 7, 3, 2, 6, 3, 4, 7, 3, 5, 7, 6, 3, 2, 4.

KLINGON REINFORCED CRUISER SQUADRON

by Terry O'Carroll, *HMAS New South Wales*

- D5L (136) = 136.
- 2xD5 (118) = 236.
- D5D (128) = 128.
- Total = 500.

This is a standard war cruiser squadron comprised of a leader and two standard cruisers, reinforced with a drone combat variant for added flexibility. I designed this squadron to be historically realistic while having enough flexibility to handle whatever the mission might be.

Strategy: (Caveat: it is possible that the Tholian commander will simply build a small globular web and then hide in it, daring us to attack. If this happens, we will simply refuse to engage. We are not under any obligation to either charge into the Tholian's guns, or lay siege to them while being battered to pieces by the pulsar. The rest of this article will assume that the Tholians are willing to fight.) The basic strategy in any fleet battle is to wear down the enemy faster than he wears you down. It is simple enough, but in this situation there are some complications.

The Pulsar: It will emit a burst at irregular intervals, damaging everything on the map. This is good for us, because the Tholians have more ships than we do, taking more overall damage from the bursts than we shall. In addition, the TK5 (which must die) and patrol corvette each have relatively thin shields. A large burst could almost destroy a shield on either ship, even in the 21-to-50 hexes range bracket. On the other hand, a burst will destroy any drones in flight, which is a problem the Tholians do not have. The Tholian squadron's small ships also have better turn modes than ours. Those ships have more freedom to pick the shield hit by the pulsar, and may also be able to maneuver so as to hit pulsar-damaged shields on our own ships. If the Tholians can successfully lay web, they will have a place to hide from pulsar bursts as well, since the web reduces the damage by the strength of the web. If they do this, ships anchoring web or web anchor buoys are good targets for our drones. We will keep a chart of the pulsar's schedule close so that we are not caught by surprise. We will not approach the pulsar closer than 21 hexes on those impulses it is set to burst. We will try to take pulsar damage on our less important shields (#3 and #5).

The pulsar, for both sides, offers a way to scrape off pursuers. Any fire that passes within 10 hexes of the pulsar suffers a +1 penalty. If the Tholians want to get close before we are ready, the pulsar can degrade their weapons fire. This will affect defensive fire against impacted drones, of course, making them harder to kill with phasers. If a burst is due soon and we can get to the

other side of the pulsar before the burst arrives, the Tholians may be reluctant to pursue us.

The Web: All of the Tholian ships have web generators, which can operate as web snares [rule (5M3)]. That can make all our impacted drones simply disappear for one point of power. That is a serious problem for us! We will have to use anti-snare tactics with our drones: multiple waves, spreading our drones out rather than stacking all of them in one hex, and try to score impacts on the Tholian ships' #1 and #4 shields which are unprotected by web snares. That way, the Tholians will have to turn and slip and even use tractor beams to get the most from their web snares. We probably will not score any damage with our drones, but at least we can make the Tholians work for it. With luck, we can make the Tholians turn an important shield towards the pulsar just in time for a burst.

The Plan: Divide and conquer. Kill their small ships first, avoiding close range where their phaser-1s are especially effective. We will launch waves of drones at their cruisers to complicate their maneuver and force them to use their web snares and phasers on our drones. Their ships have awkward weapon arcs and we may well be able to deny shots to their disruptors. We will destroy their small ships from medium to long range with our direct-fire weapons in this order: TK5, patrol corvette, destroyer. We will then close with their cruisers and engage them in a dog-fight. Our weapon arcs are far superior to those on the Tholian cruisers, so we should have an advantage. The D5D has power to burn, so it will try to tractor a Tholian ship and hold it so we can hit a weak shield (or even drag it closer to the pulsar for extra pulsar damage).

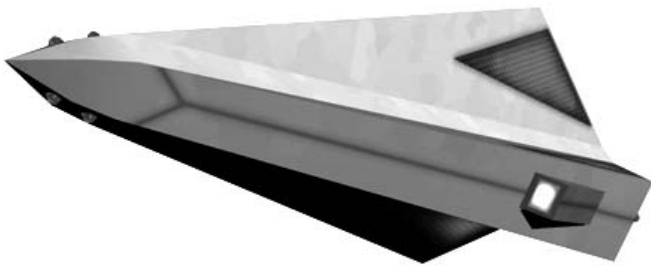
Summary: Like most games of *Federation Commander*, this is going to be all about maneuver. The squadron that takes advantage of the weak shields created on enemy ships by the pulsar while protecting its own should win.

THOLIAN DEFENSE FORCE: **CHAMPION**

by Dal Downing, *USS Wisconsin*

CC *Champion* (142) = 142.
 CA *Adarak* (134) = 134.
 DD *Vortex* (86) = 86.
 TK5 *Exile* (83) = 83.
 PCW *Safeguard* (55) = 55.
 Total = 500.

Commanders, there is a squadron of Klingon war cruisers attempting to flank our major fleet elements currently fighting the



Seltorians around Battle Station K2 and we have been given the task of stopping them. The good news is we will be making the intercept with terrain available to us. The bad news is that the terrain in question is a variable pulsar.

As we all know, pulsars are usually nothing more than a navigational nuisance by the semi-predictable nature of their pulses, but today due to the crisis at hand we cannot just engage and drive off the Klingon squadron. We are going to have to destroy that squadron, or risk it reinforcing one of the other engagements occurring today. We cannot just let them escape; we will have to fight and destroy them around the pulsar.

Because we are fighting Klingons any weapon tactics or insight I could give you based on disruptors and phasers would be of minimal use because these are the primary armaments of the enemy ships as well. The only thing I will remind everyone of is that all ships in this task force are equipped with web generators which can be used as snares to stop drones, so we must all always be mindful of where the D5D is.

Speaking of drones, if there is a ray of sunshine in this mess it is the pulsar will help us to counter some of the enemy's drones as they will be just as susceptible to damage from the pulsar as our ships are.

The one advantage we have is that we are bringing our own terrain. Our web system has the ability to help mitigate the radiation bursts thrown off by the pulsar. The *Exile* and *Safeguard* will start off forming a two-hex diameter globular web two hexes away from the corner of the map. The *Champion*, *Adarak*, and *Vortex* will move five to 10 hexes out and attempt to slow down the oncoming D5s by targeting one ship at a time. Once the globular web has been closed the *Safeguard* will remain inside it using tactical maneuvers and adding power to reinforce the web while *Exile* moves forward to assist the rest of the squadron.

The reason for creating the globular web instead of just throwing up a two-hex web is simple. If we formed a straight web, we would have to use either two of our shuttles in anchor mode or leave two ships there to act as anchors. This would leave the anchors vulnerable to destruction from both the enemy and the pulsar, which would cause the web to fail. The other reason for this is if any ship loses two or more shields, it will retreat into the web taking the *Safeguard's* place and mission while also repairing its shields. At some point I will order all ships into the web in an attempt to lure one or more of the enemy's cruisers to enter the web to snipe at us. If the enemy falls for this maneuver, all of our ships will back up two hexes except the ship with the strongest shield, which will stay in place and tractor the enemy cruiser. Once on the opposite side of the web we will continue to use our phasers against any cruisers trapped in the web one at a time. If the Klingons do not come into the web we will continue firing our phasers at the most vulnerable of their ships.

Now if the enemy will not come to us, which is unfortunately the mostly likely reaction on their part if they have an experienced commander, the battle will be much more difficult. We will need to chase them and be prepared to use our shuttles as anchors to create small two-hex firebreak terrain barriers we can use as cover while chasing them around the pulsar. This is obviously the least preferable scenario for us, but we must be prepared to use it.

To this end we know that pulsars have zone bands or steps where the radiation bursts, for lack of a better term, will bleed energy causing them to weaken the farther from the pulsar we are when they hit. Keep these break points in mind while maneuvering. If you must, spend a token or two from your energy stores for acceleration points in order to move past one of these break points. That will most likely be more beneficial to us than saving that energy to reinforce our shields when the pulse hits. Also if possible we will try to plan our maneuvers so that any down shields we have are not facing the pulsar during one of its pulses. Offensively, if we have a shot at an enemy shield that is facing the

pulsar when a burst is about to happen, we will fire every weapon we have bearing in an attempt to soften it up and allow the burst to do some of our work for us.

Commanders, regardless of which plan we are forced to adopt, the bottom line is we are facing four enemy cruisers with two cruisers and a trio of smaller ships. Every opportunity we get to fire through a down shield on an enemy ship must be maximized, even if it means giving up energy we are saving to reinforce our own shields. If all else fails and we are presented with a chance to conduct a hit-and-run raid to destroy the last system box of a weapon or control area, we must take it. Duty requires that we destroy or cripple as many of the enemy's cruisers as possible. If we have to trade the *Exile*, *Vortex*, and *Safeguard* to destroy two enemy cruisers, this is a sacrifice we must be prepared to make.

MATCH #3: BALROG NEBULA

Terrain: Nebula (6F): The Nebula is a quiet one, see the second paragraph of (6F2).

KLINGON INTERCEPTION SQUADRON

by Kenneth Thomas, *USS Tennessee*

D5WL *Rabbleslayer* (166) = 166.
 D5 *Resilience* (118) = 118.
 D6 *Desecration* (130) = 130.
 F5 *Eviscerator* (82) = 82.
 Total = 496.

Of all the Alpha Quadrant empires that fight against the Andromedan invaders, we Klingons have an advantage that gives us an edge over most of the others: the disruptor.

With the special burn-through effect enjoyed by disruptors, we can often go head-to-head with an equal sized Andromedan force if we are good or lucky, or better yet — both! We can and will win the day.

However, this engagement is taking place inside a nebula, so all bets are off and we should withdraw as the Andromedans hold all of the cards in a nebula.

Our shields are all reduced to only five boxes each.

Our drones will take damage every impulse while in flight.

Our transporters and tractors do not function.

Our shuttles would be destroyed as soon as they were launched.

The energy emissions of the nebula itself provide a shift of plus three to all weapons fire.

The Andromedan's power absorber panels, while functioning at 60% efficiency, can draw power from the nebula itself each turn and use that power to fire their weapons.

So in this battle, our best tactic would be to run immediately and return to fight another day. Circumstances force us to stay and fight, and there really is only one tactic available to us.

We will rush in quickly, turn at Range 12 to obtain the oblique angle, and fire everything we have. If we are lucky, we can get through their reduced power absorber panels and do some real damage. If we are unlucky, at least we are headed away from the Andromedans and traveling at speed.

When we perform this maneuver, we must be sure to fire just enough weapons each impulse to score 30 to 40 damage points and include at least one disruptor in each volley. Also, we must specifically target weapons! Directed targeting provides us with a 50% chance of hitting the "six" row on the Damage Chart, and any volley that includes at least one disruptor gains one leak point for every 10 points of damage scored. If we score 30 points of damage, then three points will be scored as leaks and if the power row is hit, the third one will take out a power absorber panel. If we do this enough we may shift the balance to the point

where we can stick around to finish them off.

ANDROMEDAN DE MEDICI PATROL FORCE

by Gary Carney, *HMCS Ontario*

Intruder *De Medici* (265) = 265.
 Reconnaissance Cobra *Antonio* (77) = 77.
 Cobra *Fulvius* (83) = 83.
 Viper *Crotalus* (60) = 60.
 Total = 485.

Among the earliest Andromedan motherships to emerge in the Lesser Magellanic Cloud, arriving prior to the completion of the first Desecrator starbase in 2545, *De Medici* has served at the vanguard of the invaders' operations in both the Lesser Magellanic Cloud and the Milky Way Galaxy. Although its current satellite ship complement is less than optimal, *Fulvius* and *Crotalus* provide the *De Medici* with a degree of direct combat support; while the *Antonio*'s ability to independently traverse the Rapid Transit Network allows the *De Medici* battle group to cover a wider area of Andromedan-controlled space.

At least, such would be the case in open space. However, in this circumstance, *De Medici* has been tasked with traversing a nebula. This hostile terrain feature forces its power-absorber panels to run at a decreased level, while also obliging it to deal with energy leaking in from the nebula itself. To compound these issues, it must also make do without the use of its displacement device or transporters, and so cannot launch or recover its satellite ships.

And if those problems were not enough, a Klingon squadron has been detected in close proximity. Although their own options are limited by the effects of the nebula, they have less of a time limit to watch for since their shields, although forced to operate at a minimal level, do not suffer the same seepage from the nebula itself that the Andromedans' power absorbers do.

Prior to entering the nebula, *De Medici* deployed *Fulvius* and *Crotalus* to add their light tractor-repulsor beam fire in the event of a hostile encounter and kept *Antonio* in its hangar bay where it can serve as an impromptu energy module. (Although the *De Medici* cannot transfer energy to the satellite ship's panels voluntarily, power can go to them at the fourth stage of involuntary transfer should an active panel box be disabled.)

For our first pass, *De Medici*, *Fulvius*, and *Crotalus* will close to within three hexes range of the D5W, where the die roll adjustment to our light and heavy tractor-repulsor beams will result in the least amount of "lost" damage points. We will concentrate our tractor-repulsor beams on the D5W, while keeping our on-board phasers-2s in reserve as a means of defending against any drones launched at point-blank range (where the effects of the nebula will not have time to wear them down before impact).

If after this pass our three ships are still in good enough condition to fight, we will attempt to increase the range and use the remaining tractor-repulsor beams' reload turn to attempt to clear our power absorber panels as best we can. We will then turn in to make one more pass targeting our tractor-repulsor beams against the D5 this time around. If however the damage at this point (or after the second pass) is too substantial, *De Medici* itself will move to disengage under the cover of the *Fulvius* and *Crotalus*, if it is deemed necessary to sacrifice the satellite ships in favor of the mothership.

Ultimately, we cannot afford to attempt to hold this particular field. The best we can manage in this circumstance is to land at least one (if not two) crippling blows upon the larger Klingon ships, before making the attempt to withdraw the *De Medici* to the relative comfort of open space. When it comes to pursuing our wider war aims against this region of the Milky Way Galaxy, this will have to be enough.

MATCH #4:**HEART OF DARKNESS**

Terrain: Black Hole (6D): All maps are open space. The black hole is located in hex 0815 of the top center map (which it shares with the bottom center map).

HYDRAN LDMT HARASSMENT SQUADRON

by Tony L. Thomas, *USS Tennessee*

D7H *Anarchist* (151): 2xStinger fighters (+20) = 171.
 Knight *Invulnerable* (90) = 90.
 Lancer *Attitude* (77): 4xStinger fighters (+40) = 117.
 Cuirassier *Retribution* (61) = 61.
 Cuirassier *Revenge* (61) = 61.
 Total = 500.

For days the Hydran LDMT Harassment Squadron has been tracking an elusive signal of Vudar origin across the southern boundary of the Hydran Kingdom. When they finally caught up to the source of the signal, Captain H'rym of the D7H *Anarchist* was shocked to find four Vudar war cruisers orbiting just outside the Schwarzschild Radius of a previously unclassified black hole. Knowing that he was in for a glorious battle but that he had the edge, H'rym was determined to see the trespassing Vudar brought to justice . . .

This battle will show the truth of the Federation saying: "Speed is life!" Any battle fought in the vicinity of a black hole involves maintaining a speed great enough to avoid being sucked into that ever-hungry maw. With the triple advantage of superior maneuverability, numerical superiority, and a greater number of direct-fire weapons, this battle is ours to lose.

With greater maneuverability, maintaining a speed advantage should allow us to remain at a greater distance from the black hole than the Vudar. This will then present the Vudar with a two-fold power problem. They will be expending power to remain outside the black hole as it is pulling them deeper into its gravity well and attempting to pour enough power into their weapons to reduce our ships to mission kills, i.e., unable to both maneuver away from the black hole and still fight.

Our greater number of direct-fire weapons also plays to our favor. While the Vudar can use their ion pulse generators to provide them a die roll shift, we have eight hellbore cannons, five fusion beams, seven phaser-1s, 10 phaser-2s, and eight phaser-Gs as well as six Stinger fighters. This compares to their eight ion cannons, eight phaser-1s, eight phaser-2s, and eight phaser-3s. By direct-targeting power on the Vudar ships we have a 50% chance of scoring hits on their power tracks. If we score enough of those hits, the Vudar ships will not be able to stay out of the black hole's gravity well.

Our third advantage is numerical superiority. With a total of five ships (and six Stingers) against four Vudar ships, we will have the option to either focus our fire for maximum effect or spread it out to cover every Vudar ship to one extent or another depending on the tactical situation at the time.

So to summarize, our strategy will be:

Keep up speed to maintain our maneuverability advantage.

Maneuver so as to keep the Vudar forces inside of us, relative to the black hole.

Use our advantageous number of ships and direct-fire weapons to target the Vudar power systems.

Reduce Vudar power levels until they disengage or risk being eaten by the black hole.

Win the battle!!!

VUDAR STORM SQUADRON

by Jim Dauphinais, *USS Missouri*

CW *Hurricane* (125) = 125.
 CW *Maelstrom* (125) = 125.
 CW *Scourge of the Tyrants* (125) = 125.
 CW *Sword of the Prophet* (125) = 125.
 Total = 500.

We have been sent to drive away a Hydran squadron that has intruded into the Enclave in the vicinity of a black hole near our border with the Hydran Star Kingdom. The Hydrans have brought a hodgepodge squadron that consists of two hellbore-armed frigates, a hellbore-armed destroyer, a fusion-armed destroyer, six Stingers, and a captured Klingon D7 battlecruiser refitted with hellbore cannons and fusion beams! Fortunately for us, the enemy's hodgepodge squadron has a number of weaknesses versus our efficient "storm" squadron of four war cruisers — especially in the vicinity of a black hole.

Our tactical analysis shows that in a head-to-head overloaded weapons exchange in open space, our squadron can be expected to inflict about 25% to 65% more damage than the Hydran squadron at a range of three to eight hexes (peaking at about 65% more damage at five hexes range). However, the Hydran squadron becomes a serious danger to us if it can get within a range of two hexes where it can expect to inflict about 25% to 60% more damage than our squadron due to the very strong close-range firepower of their fusion beams and phaser-Gs. In this hypothetical exchange, we would have more spare energy for movement, but the Hydrans have a better turn mode rating. Thus, in open space, our strategy will be to close quickly to just within overload range, fire and then be very careful not to allow the Hydran squadron within two hexes of our squadron. This can be achieved by making use of the speed advantage provided by our having more spare energy available, in this exchange, than the Hydran squadron can muster. This said, most of the area over which we will be fighting is not open space and is instead dominated by a black hole at its center that impacts nearly the entire map.

All units within 20 hexes of the black hole will be involuntarily pulled toward it an effective speed of 8. This increases to an effective speed of 16 at 10 hexes, 24 at five hexes, and 32 at two hexes. As a result, the Hydran Stingers, with their maximum speed of 16, will have difficulty operating within 20 hexes of the black hole and will be virtually unusable within 10 hexes of the black hole.

The black hole also interferes with direct fire. Any line of sight that passes within 10 hexes of the black hole adds a die roll modifier of plus one to weapons fire due to electromagnetic interference. Line of sight within two hexes of the black hole is blocked outright.

Finally, any ship, including any wreckage from a previously destroyed ship, that is actually drawn into the black hole itself is immediately eliminated and releases a radiation burst causing damage to all units within 30 hexes of the black hole. The amount of damage ranges from 16 times the movement cost of the eliminated ship within five hexes of the black hole to four times the movement cost of the ship at 30 hexes from the black hole.

Operating in this environment radically changes the hypothetical head-to-head open-space exchange of fire. If we assume both squadrons are within 10 hexes of the black hole (where they are each being pulled toward the black hole at an effective speed of 16), they will both likely be saving enough energy to move at Speed 24 through a combination of baseline speed and acceleration. In this situation, the energy available for weapons for both sides will be limited. In addition, the Hydran Stingers will likely not be deployed outside their carrying ships (due to their maximum speed of 16). Finally, all fire will be subject to a die roll modifier of plus one.

Our tactical analysis shows this much more adversely affects the Hydran squadron than our squadron. Specifically, at three-to-eight hexes range we roughly retain the same firepower advantage over the Hydrans that we have in open space (now a 20% to 65% advantage rather than a 25% to 65% advantage). However, the Hydran firepower advantage at Range 2 and closer diminishes to only about 10% to 20% greater than our firepower. More importantly, at a range of 9 to 15 hexes, we now have a firepower advantage of 40% to 50% over the Hydrans. The implication of all of this is that the Hydrans are very unlikely to enter into a 10 hex radius around the black hole and will likely challenge us outside of that radius due to the pull of the black hole.

In light of all of this, we will take the following course of action. We will operate in two adjacent stacks of two ships each at a baseline speed of 16. We will initially move towards the Hydrans via our left. We will skirt outside the periphery of the 10-hex radius around the black hole by using acceleration and sideslips to offset the Speed 8 pull of the black hole. We will try to time our entry to just within overload range of the Hydrans such that the line of sight will run within 10 hexes of the black hole. If that does not appear feasible we will exchange fire at 9-to-15 hexes range rather than just within overload range if this will allow the line of sight to run within 10 hexes of the black hole. Regardless of the range at which we fire at the Hydrans, in order to save energy for movement, we will not use overloads on our ion cannons and we will target power systems on the Hydran ships if we fire within 10 hexes. We will initially focus on the Hydran frigates, as they are the most vulnerable to speed loss due to the loss of energy. If we fire within overload range, we will fire two of our ships at one of the frigates and the other two ships at the other frigate. If we are in the 9-to-15 hex range bracket when we fire, all four of our ships will fire at only one of the Hydran frigates.

After firing, we will turn away from the black hole, to reverse course and break away from the Hydrans. This will have the effect of allowing us to make a tighter turn due to the Speed 8 pull of the black hole, which does not count for or against fulfilling the turn mode of our ships. We will then run away from the Hydrans along the outside of the periphery of the 10-hex radius around the black hole using acceleration and sideslips until our ion cannons are reloaded. Once our ion cannons are reloaded, we will turn to the right, again away from the black hole, in order reverse course back toward the Hydrans along the outside of the periphery of the 10-hex radius around the black hole. Once again, by turning away from the black hole, we will be able to make a tighter turn than we would otherwise be able to perform. We will repeat this process to defeat the Hydrans through repeated attrition. If we are patient and maintain our discipline, we should gain the upper hand through attrition and succeed in driving off the Hydran intruders.



MATCH #5: A REGULAR BATTLE

Terrain: Regular Pulsar (6E1c): All maps are open space. The pulsar is located in hex 0815 of the top center map (which it shares with the bottom center map). The pulsar releases a pulse every second turn on the fourth impulse.

THE OLD KZINTI WARHORSES

by Paul Pease, *USS Colorado*

CL-6 *Warlock* (96) = 96.
 CL-15 *Shadowdancer* (96) = 96.
 CL-16 *Necromancer* (96) = 96.
 CL-17 *Spellsinger* (96) = 96.
 CL-18 *Runesinger* (96) = 96.
 Total = 480.

A quick analysis of our ships shows that we have a decent amount of firepower available every turn, but limited power to charge our weapons. A similar analysis of the enemy's ships shows that they have significant firepower on turns when their photon torpedoes are charged and they can have significant power for other uses on those turns if they double their warp engines.

One of the threats we must address is their ability to double their engines, have fully overloaded photons, and still move at significant speed on turns of their choosing. To address this, on turns the Orion forces double their warp engines, we will move at Baseline Speed Zero to save power and will use acceleration to move our ships as necessary. This will allow us to have power to overload our disruptors, fire our phasers, power our tractors, use our transporters, and potentially have power for shield reinforcement. This is a conscious trade-off that deliberately sacrifices the initiative (and control of the range) to our opponent, but keeps sufficient power available to deal as much damage as possible to the enemy on these turns.

The pulsar will cause us some challenges as it will damage all our ships and will normally destroy (automatically within 20 hexes) any of our drones that are in space (i.e., on the map). It also creates an additional vulnerability in that our opponent can maneuver to try to fire on the same shield on our ships that the pulsar is hitting. We will minimize the chances of our opponent firing on the same shield the pulsar is hitting by ending the movement on a pulsar emission impulse in a hex just outside the damage drop off bracket (i.e., at 11 hexes or 21 hexes). The enemy can still be inside of us to take a shot, but he will take more damage from the pulsar. If the enemy is maneuvering to enter our hex on the last subpulse of a pulsar emission impulse (trying to shoot at the same shield as the pulsar is hitting while enjoying the benefit of the same damage bracket) we will use acceleration and deceleration to attempt to frustrate him.

Maneuvering will also be used to avoid the special case where both ships can be on the outside edge of a pulsar range damage bracket, but the enemy ship can shoot at a pulsar-damaged shield on our ships and we cannot reciprocate. If we can create the reverse situation of any of the above, we will take advantage of the opportunity.

On the first turn we will maneuver such that we take pulsar damage in the 21-to-50 hex bracket and on one of our side shields (#2 or #6) or rear quarter (preferred) shields (#3 or #5) if possible.

Our drones will be used to tie up the enemy's phasers and to attempt to damage his ships. We will target the enemy's Light Raiders to avoid the anti-drones on the Double Raiders. This should cause the enemy some defensive fire challenges as the Light Raiders have a smaller overall number of phasers available to use in the Defensive Fire Phase.

On any turn when the Orions are closing, we will launch drones from all four racks (if available). If the Orions are keeping the range open on any given turn, we will use that opportunity to reload the drone racks that are low on ammunition. Drones will be spread out to the extent possible in an effort to force the enemy to shoot them down instead of just maneuvering around them while using a high baseline speed and acceleration.

On turns where the pulsar will emit a radiation burst, we will launch drones early to impact the enemy before the burst, or we will launch them after the burst. The timing of the launch will be determined by considering the range to target, the enemy's maneuvers, and the burst impulse of the pulsar.

Directed targeting against weapons will be used until an enemy ship has noticeable damage, then normal targeting will be used. Hit-and-run raids will be used against enemy photon torpedoes when opportunities present. The goal of targeting weapons and raiding photon torpedoes is to destroy the enemy's heaviest hitting weapons (photon torpedoes) and possibly delay their firing by destroying them when they are pre-loaded or loaded.

Our direct-fire weapons will concentrate on the Orion Light Raiders initially as they have the same number of heavy hitting photon torpedoes as the Double Raiders, but have weaker shields and can take less damage. If the enemy has shuttles and power available, some of our phaser-3s will be left unfired and power will be retained to fire them or to use tractor beams as defense against suicide shuttles. These are a tangible threat with the large amount of power available to Orion ships with doubled engines.

ORION DOUBLE TROUBLE

by Paul Scott, *USS California*

DBR *Attorney* (100): Options: A, B, C; photon torpedo-FA (+0), D; anti-drone (-2), E; phaser-G-RS (+2) = 100.

DBR *Barrister* (100): Options: A, B, C; photon torpedo-FA (+0), D; phaser-G-LS (+2), E; anti-drone (-2) = 100.

4xLR *Hooligan, Ruffian, Vagabond, Thug* (300): Each: Options A, B, C; photon torpedo-FA (+0) = 300.

Total = 500.

"Fellow entrepreneurs, we have a battle at hand. Our squadron will triumph, partly because of your courage and partly because of my rugged good looks. As you know, I handpicked your ships and your weapons to ensure we could win any battle and this one is nothing we cannot handle. We have *lots* of photon torpedoes, which concentrate damage on any target we pick. Our damage control ratings are higher, meaning we can take a pounding and keep on pounding them back. Your Light Raiders were picked because of your nimble speed and quick movement. You all laughed when I selected anti-drones, but the enemy we face are Kzintis, so who's laughing now?"

"Our basic plan is to arm our photon torpedoes at standard level on Turn #1, then slowly move our ships to a Range 8 or 12 firing position. From there we should be able to effectively eliminate two to three of the Kzinti ships (depending on whether overloads can be made available). If positioning allows an obvious Range-8 shot, then on that turn we will double our engines.

Baseline speed of all ships will be 24 with evasive maneuvers, which will leave us the power needed to hold our photon torpedoes. This plot will allow our Double Raiders to add a hex of movement on four impulses without having to use battery power. You Light Raiders will be able to add a hex of movement on six impulses without having to use your batteries. This should be more than enough to evade drones. Also, we must not forget that the pulsar will kill all the drones for us every other turn.

The Kzinti light cruisers will fire at us with a shift of three, except on the turns we choose to engage. This should make any long-range (nine hexes or more) disruptor fire negligible and will bring phaser damage to zero. Other than being careful about the

timing, the pulsar is of little concern to us. In fact, it will work strongly in our favor as we have no seeking weapons and our shields are stronger (and we have the ability to double our engines on occasion to do shield repairs).

MATCH #6: A HORSE TOO FAR

Terrain: Regular Pulsar (6E1c): All maps are open space. The pulsar is located in hex 0815 of the top center map (which it shares with the bottom center map). The pulsar releases a pulse every second turn on the fourth impulse.

THE OLD KZINTI WARHORSES

by Paul Pease, *USS Colorado*

CL-6 *Warlock* (96) = 96.

CL-15 *Shadowdancer* (96) = 96.

CL-16 *Necromancer* (96) = 96.

CL-17 *Spellsinger* (96) = 96.

CL-18 *Runesinger* (96) = 96.

Total = 480.

"We just whipped those Orions, so I volunteered us for another battle! Imagine the glory that will result!"

As the enemy has heavy-hitting plasma torpedoes and more phaser-1s that we do, we will conduct a long-range maneuver-and-fire battle to wear the enemy down. (There is a reason I said "maneuver" first and *then* "fire.") We will attempt to maintain our distance from the enemy, with the point of closest approach on a given turn being 11-to-15 hexes. These ranges will allow us to fire disruptors with a reasonable chance of hitting, while maintaining enough range to evade the enemy's plasma torpedoes and lower the hit probability for plasma bolts. We will sacrifice power for weapons fire to maintain speed and range as required. When our ships start taking damage, the priority of repair will be power systems and disruptors.

The pulsar will present a number of challenges to our plan for a long-range duel. We will need to minimize the damage pulsar bursts cause to our ships as we will be hit by multiple bursts during the engagement. When possible, we will try to ensure that we are 21 or more hexes from the pulsar (map corners) during the burst impulses. If necessary we will take damage in the next closer range bracket, but we will always stay more than 10 hexes from the pulsar. If power is available, we will use shield reinforcement to minimize shield damage from the bursts. On the first turn of the battle we will maneuver to stay in the 21+ range bracket from the pulsar and take the burst damage on a side shield, preferably one of the ones on the back sides of our ships. On turns when the pulsar is releasing a burst, we will look for opportunities to shoot at the enemy's shield that will be damaged by the pulsar while denying the enemy a similar firing opportunity.

We will concentrate our disruptor fire on the same shield (when possible) of a single ship in an effort to wear the enemy down. Our primary target will be the King Eagle followed by the War Eagle as we want to degrade the Romulans' ability to use their heavier plasma torpedoes.

We will launch our drones in waves, with one wave being launched on Impulse #8 of one turn and the next wave on Impulse #1 of the following turn. With our ships having a total of 20 drone racks (up to 40 drones over two turns) and our enemy only having 29 phasers, we should be able to encourage them to maneuver away and potentially cause damage after overwhelming their drone defenses. Initially, the primary targets of our drones will be the King Eagle and the War Eagle as we want to force long-range fire from the plasma-R torpedo launchers. We will time the launching of our drones to minimize the chance of their being destroyed by pulsar bursts. We will keep our drones spread in adjacent hexes to prevent the enemy from maneuvering around all of them. We will look for opportunities to launch drones on

impulses where a Romulan ship is fading out as the drones will maintain lock and be able to close on the cloaked ship. Once we have launched an initial drone volley, we will reload racks as possible to avoid having multiple racks low on drones or empty. Drone launches are to be sequenced to remain within the control limits of our ships (maximum of 30 drones in space at any given time).

Our squadron will maintain a tight formation to improve phaser defense versus the enemy plasma torpedoes. All ships not targeted by plasma torpedoes will maneuver closer to the enemy to fire at any plasma torpedoes before they hit our ships. The ships targeted by the plasma torpedoes will maneuver away to degrade the damage caused by the plasma torpedoes. The tight formation will also aid in ensuring all our disruptor fire is against a single enemy shield.

If we are unsuccessful in maintaining long range, we will target enemy weapons or fire overloaded disruptors based on range and available power. If the range degrades to five hexes or less, we will use hit-and-run raids against the Romulan plasma torpedo launchers if their shields are down. We will make every effort to stay out of tractor range as being tractored will likely result in a quick death of the tractored ship. If the enemy launches all or most of his plasma torpedoes we will evade as necessary and then attempt to close the range and deliver concentrated close range fire. If we are successful in wearing the enemy down we will close behind a wave of drones and use weapons targeting, overloaded weapons, and hit-and-run raids (as above) in an effort to destroy their ships.

ROMULAN BIRDS OF VICTORY

by Art Trotman, *HMCS Ontario*

King Eagle *Vindex* (140) = 140.
 War Eagle *Acheron* (103) = 103.
 BattleHawk *Bloodwing* (88) = 88.
 BattleHawk *Starwing* (88) = 88.
 SeaHawk *Trusty* (80) = 80.
 Total = 499.

The Kzinti force has a combined total of 10 phaser-1s, 20 phaser-3s, 20 disruptors, and 20 drone racks, while our force has 19 phaser-1s, 10 phaser-3s (eight of which are in rear or side arcs), two plasma-R torpedoes, four plasma-G torpedoes, and four plasma-F torpedoes. The enemy definitely has a fire-power advantage if we look at the turn-by-turn output of their ships. All of their weapons can fire every turn. We will have to make use of our larger alpha-strike capabilities depending on their baseline speeds. If they slow down to fire all of their weapons then the battle should be ours. If they are patient and keep their speed up the battle will probably be theirs.

I would prefer to start the battle just outside of 10 hexes range to avoid our being ripped apart by 20 overloaded disruptors at Range 8 or less. We will start the battle cloaked to prevent the enemy from launching a wave of drones at us.

The pulsar does present some issues for both of us. However, I think that since their drones will be destroyed by the pulsar's bursts at all possible ranges (except on a die result of "one" at 21-50 hexes range) the Kzintis will likely want to get close to us on odd turns. We will definitely use this to our advantage as we also want to get close, or relatively close, to strike.

We will begin the first turn in cloak and moving at a slow baseline speed of zero or eight. We will also start with our batteries drained and in the third turn of arming our plasma torpedoes (except for our plasma-F torpedoes, as they are already armed). The *Vindex* and *Acheron* will arm their plasma-R torpedoes as plasma-S torpedoes, upgrading them to plasma-R torpedoes upon launch. Our plan is to ride out the second turn as far away from the pulsar as possible, recharging our batteries and taking the pulsar burst on side shields while using our batteries to re-

duce as much damage as possible.

Once past the pulsar burst we will race past the pulsar by accelerating.

On the next turn we will decloak and, at Baseline Speed 24, head toward the Kzintis in a very close formation. This will allow us to have a better chance of protecting each other from being overwhelmed by Kzinti drones. If the Kzintis are moving at a Baseline Speed 16 or less, when we approach Range 12, we will launch all of our plasma torpedoes that bear on the target, and you captains better make sure they all do! We will evenly split our plasma torpedoes between two of his light cruisers, then accelerate and fire all 19 of our phaser-1s at the closest possible range at a third light cruiser. We will be prepared to execute a high energy turn after firing our phaser-1s in order to bring our 10 rear-firing phaser-3s into arc for drone defense. At this range, the Kzintis will have to either continue forward for at least another two impulses in order to get to a range where their disruptors can do serious damage and their drones will have a better chance of catching us before we can turn away.

I expect the Kzintis to target *Vindex*, so we will keep it back a bit behind our other ships protect it. However if the Kzintis are moving faster than Baseline Speed 16 we will allow them to approach to under 10 hexes, or even eight hexes, range and see if they spend their remaining power (I would estimate this as 10 points) on their disruptors and phasers. If they do, then we can launch our regular plasma torpedoes divided between three of their ships. We will also divide our 19 phaser-1s among those three ships, which should gut them, while their fire will either cripple *Acheron* or destroy *Trusty* and damage one of our Battle-Hawks.

If the Kzintis save energy for high energy turns then we will have to bolt all of our plasma torpedoes at a single target and try to accelerate enough to get good hits with our phaser-1s on a second of their ships. It is risky, but this is an all-or-nothing move; if (the statistically expected) half of our plasma bolts hit and our 19 phaser-1s do their job at Range 5 or 6-8, then we should be able to destroy one Kzinti light cruiser and cripple a second. Whatever happens we must ensure that we come out with more viable ships than the Kzintis have remaining.

If we are able to get three of their ships we will not be going back into cloak as long as we have not lost two ships. We will continue to use our superior number of phaser-1s very aggressively despite their eight drone racks, and try to destroy another of their ships on the following turn, while fast loading our plasma-R torpedoes and plasma-G torpedoes as plasma-F torpedoes. On the following turn, we will have armed plasma-F torpedoes and will get those back into play as soon as possible on the two remaining Kzinti ships.

However, should it be the second case where we have only lightly damaged one or two of the Kzinti ships, then we will definitely fully rearm our plasma torpedoes and go into cloak for three turns to get all of our plasma torpedoes rearmed. We will during this period open the range as much as possible until we are ready to attack the Kzintis again. In such case we will come at them fast on Turn #5 to make sure we can launch all of our plasma torpedoes close enough to the Kzintis that they cannot escape, even with a risky second high energy turn, which is unlikely since they will likely have already done it once. Even with only three undamaged ships and one slightly damaged ship remaining to us, we should be able to seriously damage at least two of the Kzintis' remaining three or four ships.

Once I have them on the run we can go into cloak, expand our distance from the pulsar, fully rearm our plasma torpedoes over another three turns and then take the Kzintis on again four turns after we initiated the rearming. This attack should decide the battle.

With a good mix of aggression and patience, this battle should be a victorious outing for "The Birds of Victory."

NEW SCENARIOS

[8C39] CONVOY BATTLE

In the dark first days of the Romulan invasion of the Federation, hundreds of freighters ran from the border regions toward the Federation interior, hoping against hope that they would not be caught by a Romulan raider.

This battle is typical of most, involving a few freighters of a scheduled convoy (which has gathered a stray or two) shepherded by a police cutter. The convoy was joined by a damaged Federation frigate headed for the repair facilities at Battle Station Romeo One. In a convoy such as this one, there is some benefit to mutual self-defense and some hope that an attacking raider will single out someone else for destruction.

Note: It would be impossible to replicate the subterfuge of the captured *Mallory* in the fiction story, so this scenario is envisioned as a normal convoy battle, the one that the captain of the police cutter *Beckett* thought he was about to fight.

(8C39a) NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Two: The Federation player and the Romulan player.

(8C39b) INITIAL SETUP

Map: Set up the map with three panels across and two panels high if using small hexes (four wide and three high if using large hexes).

This is a “floating map” as there is no terrain in the area. Any unit which moves more than 25 hexes from “the convoy” (8C39d2) has disengaged and cannot return.

Federation: Place the police cutter *Beckett* in the center of the map. Within two hexes of it, place two large freighters, four small freighters, the damaged frigate *Mallory*, a Free Trader, and an Armed Priority Transport. All ships are facing in direction F.

Romulan: Place three K5Rs 26 or more hexes in directions C-D from the *Beckett*. All three Romulan ships must be in the same hex or in adjacent hexes. (Historically, these were a K5L, K5R, and K5S, but two of those are not in FC at this time.)

(8C39c) OBJECTIVE

Mission-Convoy: Stay alive. Drive away the Romulan raiders and keep moving toward safety.

Mission-Romulans: Destroy as many freighters as you can. Destroying the police cutter and/or frigate would be a bonus.

Time Limit: The scenario continues until all Federation units have been destroyed or captured, or until the Romulan units have left the scenario.

Victory: Use the Point Value Victory System (8B2) to determine the winner.

(8C39d) SPECIAL RULES

1. USS *Mallory*: Before the scenario begins, roll 24 points of internal damage on this ship (12 points in Fleet Scale). All shield damage has been repaired.

2. The Convoy: The convoy consists of the freighters, Free Trader, and APT. These ships must all stay at Baseline Speed 16 and must all stay within four hexes of all other ships of “the convoy.” If a convoy ship is damaged and unable to make this speed, that ship is detached from “the convoy” and will inevitably fall behind. If it falls more than 25 hexes behind the other ships of “the convoy” it is considered to be destroyed by the Romulans.

(8C39e) FORCE DYNAMICS

The scenario can be played again under different conditions by making one or more of the following changes:

1. Alternative Ships: Replace the Romulan ships with other Romulan ships of the same or lower total point value.

2. Alternative Empires: Replace one or more of the empires present with other empires, keeping the ships of approximately the same point value.

3. Balance: The balance of the scenario could be adjusted by replacing any ship with the next larger or smaller size.

(8C39f) DESIGNER'S NOTES

This scenario was written new for *Federation Commander* by Stephen V. Cole.

[8C40] I'VE GOT YOU COVERED

In 2569, during the heavy fighting at the start of the General War, in which the Kzinti lost most of their territory, one squadron led by the light dreadnought *Thundermark* was badly shot up by a Klingon force. As the Kzinti squadron withdrew toward its base, it was pursued by a Lyran battle group. The Lyrans roared into battle intent on destroying the crippled Kzinti. The commander of the undamaged Kzinti DNL signaled to its battered consorts: “Maintain best speed, I’ve got you covered.”

(8C40a) NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Two: The Kzinti player and the Lyran player.

(8C40b) INITIAL SETUP

Map: Set up the map with 3 panels across and 2 panels high if using small hexes (4 wide and 3 high if using large hexes).

Use a “floating” map since the battle is in open space with no borders or terrain features to restrict the movement of the ships. Any unit which ends the turn more than 25 hexes from all enemy units has disengaged and has left the scenario. Kzinti ships can only disengage in directions A or B (or between those directions), and must have no enemy ships in their FA arc at the time of disengagement. Lyran ships can only disengage in directions C, D, or E (or between those directions), and must have no enemy ships in their FA arc at the time of disengagement. Ships which disengage in unauthorized directions are considered destroyed.

Kzinti: Place a DNL in any convenient hex in the upper right corner of the map. Place a CM, CL, BC, and 2xFF, all in separate hexes, within three hexes of the DNL in direction A/C. All ships are facing direction B.

Lyran: Place a Jaguar CW in any hex that is 26 hexes away from the DNL in direction D/E. Place a BC, a CL, and a DW, all in separate hexes, within 3 hexes of the CW in direction D/E. All ships are facing direction B.

(8C40c) OBJECTIVE

Mission-Kzinti: Destroy or drive off the Lyran units so your damaged ships can escape.

Mission-Lyran: Destroy the Kzinti forces.

Time Limit: The scenario continues until all ships belonging to one player have been captured or destroyed, or have disengaged.

Victory: Use the Point Value Victory System (8B2) to determine the winner.

(8C40d) SPECIAL RULES

1. Battle Damage: The Kzinti forces have been heavily damaged and are retreating to base for repairs. For each ship, reduce the indicated shield to six boxes (three in Fleet Scale), and apply the indicated number of internal damage points. Then, allow each ship to repair a number of boxes equal to its damage control rating (e.g., the BC can repair four boxes in Squadron Scale and two in Fleet Scale, while an FF can repair two in Squadron Scale and one in Fleet Scale).

- A. CM: shield #1, 38 points of internal damage (19 in Fleet Scale); no repairs have been done.
- B. CL: shield #3, 31 points of internal damage (16 in Fleet Scale); no repairs have been done.
- C. BC: shield #4, 42 points of internal damage (21 in Fleet Scale); no repairs have been done.
- D. FF#1: shield #2, 16 points of internal damage (8 in Fleet Scale); no repairs have been done.
- E. FF#2: shield #5, 19 point of internal damage (10 in Fleet Scale); no repairs have been done.
- F. DNL: no damage

(8C40e) FORCE DYNAMICS

The scenario can be played again under different conditions by making one or more of the following changes:

1. **Alternative Ships:** Replace the Lyrans with a Klingon force including a D7C, D5, D6, and F5.
2. **Balance:** The balance of the scenario could be adjusted by replacing the Lyran BC with a DN or CA, or replacing the Kzinti DNL with a BC or DNH.
3. **Faster Scenario:** To finish this scenario in a shorter time, remove the Kzinti BC and CL and the Lyran CL.

(8C40f) DESIGNER'S NOTES

This scenario was originally designed for *Star Fleet Battles* by Steven P. Petrick and was published as SH201 in *SFB Module R7*. It was converted to *Federation Commander* by Paul Cordeiro.

[8C41] FASTER, PUSSYCAT! KILL! KILL!

Lyrans and Kzintis hate each other with a fury that many other species regard as insane. So when two battle fleets encountered each other near a black hole, the result was inevitable. Each commander wanted his enemy destroyed, not just for military reasons, but for the cruel joy of seeing his enemy ripped atom from atom by the tearing gravity of the black hole!

(8C41a) NUMBER OF PLAYERS

Two: The Lyran player and the Kzinti player.

(8C41b) INITIAL SETUP

Map: Set up the map with 3 panels across and 2 panels high if using small hexes (4 wide and 3 high if using large hexes). Place a black hole in the center of the map. The map is a "location map"; any ship which moves more than 30 hexes from the black hole has disengaged; see (8CM41e1), below.

Lyran: Set up a DN, CC, 2xCA, 2xCW, DD, FF, up to 25 hexes from the black hole in directions F-A (inclusive)

Kzinti: Set up a DN, BCH, CC, BC, MC, DW, FF up to 25 hexes from the black hole in directions C-D inclusive.

(8C41c) OBJECTIVE

Mission-Both: Smash your enemy's ships and laugh as they helplessly fall into the black hole's gravity!

Time Limit: The scenario continues until all ships belonging to one player are captured or destroyed, or have disengaged.

Victory: This is intended as a beer-and-pretzels bloodbath, so victory is simple: the player who sends the most enemy ships to their doom in the black hole wins! Ships must be destroyed by entering the black hole hex to score; destroyed ships which subsequently fall into the black hole as wreckage don't count.

Players who like to take their *Federation Commandera* little more seriously may use the Point Value Victory System (8B2) instead. If this option is used, players score bonus points equal to the point value of the ship for any ships which are destroyed

as a result of entering the black hole hex. This bonus is not scored for any ships which are destroyed and subsequently fall into the black hole as wreckage.

(8C41d) SPECIAL RULES

1. **No Escape:** Any ship which voluntarily moves more than 30 hexes from the black hole is immediately destroyed as if it had fallen into the black hole hex; this will not cause a radiation burst. If a ship tries to force an enemy ship beyond the 30 hex limit with a tractor beam, the tractor is immediately broken.

(8C41e) FORCE DYNAMICS

This scenario can be played again under different conditions by making one or more of the following changes:

1. **Alternate Empires:** Replace one or both forces with one of the forces listed below:

- Romulan: Condor, NovaHawk, King Eagle, FireHawk, KR, SparrowHawk, SkyHawk, K5R.
- Gorn: DN, BCH, CC, BC, HDD, CL, BDD, DD
- Hydran: Paladin, CC, CA (Dragoon or Ranger), 2xCM, DD, 2xFF, with 12 total Stinger fighters.
- Federation: DNG, BC, CC, CA, NCL, DW, FFB, FF
- Klingon: C8, C7, D7C, D7, D5, F5, E4.

2. **Battleships:** Players who own *Battleships Attack* could add a battleship to each side. Or a heavy dreadnought. Or both!

3. **Fast Drones:** The Lyran forces have a lot of drone defenses in this scenario, between ESGs and the gravity effects of the black hole. To balance this out, players might allow the Kzintis to use the fast drones option.

4. **Wimp:** To make the scenario less brutal, ignore (8CM41e1) and any ship moving more than 30 hexes from the black hole has disengaged normally, but is still humiliated and the captain is relieved of command for cowardice.

5. **Tough Guy:** To make the scenario deadlier, use one or more of the following special rules:

• **Falling Rock Zone:** Players pick a convenient number of asteroid counters and alternate placing them on the map before play begins. These are "medium asteroids" for towing purposes. For radiation burst purposes, they are considered to have a movement cost of 1 (or any other value mutually agreed to by the players). Alternatively, the asteroids can be placed randomly by dice rolls. Roll one die to determine the direction from the black hole, using the scatter diagram. Roll three dice and add the results together, and place the asteroid counter that many hexes from the black hole in the direction indicated. If the players wish, whenever an asteroid enters the black hole hex it may be replaced on the map using this random method.

• **Warped Space:** The black hole's effect on the fabric of space could cause warp engines to be more vulnerable. If this option is used, all volleys may use directed targeting against power, even if not otherwise eligible to use directed targeting.

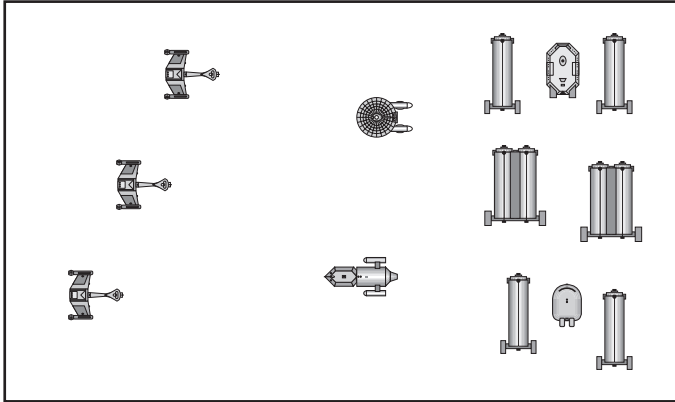
(8C41f) DESIGNER'S NOTES

This scenario was written new for *Federation Commander* by Terry O'Carroll.

Tactics: Using directed targeting against power is obvious. Look for opportunities to evacuate and self destruct your doomed ships before they fall into the hole and try to stop your opponent from doing the same. Getting between the black hole and the enemy has some advantages but also some costs. If you can be on a line between the hole and your target when a ship falls into the hole, you'll be firing at a shield damaged by the radiation burst while the enemy's return fire will be hitting an undamaged shield, and maybe with a die roll shift as well. The Lyran can also "scrape off" Kzinti drones by making the drones fly close enough to the hole that they cannot escape (5 hexes); but on the other hand, the Kzintis may be launching "downhill" at the Lyrans, making the drones close even faster.

SFB SCENARIOS

(SL315.0) CONVOY BATTLE



(Y173)

by Stephen V. Cole, Texas

In the dark first days of the Romulan invasion of the Federation, hundreds of freighters ran from the border regions toward the Federation interior, hoping against hope that they would not be caught by a Romulan raider.

This battle is typical of most, involving a few freighters of a scheduled convoy (which has gathered a stray or two) shepherded by a police cutter. A damaged Federation frigate headed for the repair facilities at Battle Station Romeo One joined the convoy. In a convoy such as this one, there is some benefit to mutual self-defense and some hope that an attacking raider will single out someone else for destruction.

Note: It would be impossible to replicate the subterfuge of the captured *Mallory*, so this scenario is envisioned as a normal convoy battle, the one that the captain of the police cutter *Beckett* thought he was about to fight. In plainer terms, this *Mallory* has not been captured.

(SL315.1) NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 2; the Federation player and the Romulan player.

(SL315.2) INITIAL SETUP

FEDERATION: Set up the Pol+a *Beckett* in hex 2204.

Set up anywhere within two hexes of hex 2204: Federation FFGa *Mallory* [see (SL315.45)], POL *Beckett*, two large freighters, four small freighters, a Free Trader, and an armed priority transport. See (SL315.46).

All Federation ships are heading F, Speed 9, WS-III.

ROMULAN: K5L *Loyal Spirit*, K5RB *Nemesis*, and K5SB *Ranger* set up anywhere 26 hexes or more in directions C or D from hex 2204, heading A or F, Speed Max, WS-III. All three ships must be in the same hex or in adjacent hexes when first placed on the map. See (SL315.47).

(SL315.3) LENGTH OF SCENARIO: The scenario continues until all forces belonging to one side have been destroyed, captured, or have disengaged.

(SL315.4) SPECIAL RULES

(SL315.41) MAP: Use a floating map. The Federation units can only disengage in directions A or F. The Romulan units can only

disengage in directions C or D. Units which disengage in unauthorized directions are considered destroyed.

(SL315.42) SHUTTLES AND PFs: No shuttles or PFs have warp booster packs. Megapacks are not available.

(SL315.421) No ship in this scenario is qualified to carry an MRS shuttle, but in a variant of the scenario where that is possible, they may be purchased [up to the limits in (J8.5)] under (SL315.431).

(SL315.422) There are no fighters in this scenario. In a variant in which fighters are present, use the standard deployment patterns (one electronic warfare fighter for each squadron of eight or more fighters) for electronic warfare fighters.

(SL315.423) There are no PFs in this scenario.

(SL315.43) COMMANDER'S OPTION ITEMS

(SL315.431) Each ship except the *Mallory* can purchase additional or special equipment as Commander's Option Items (e.g., T-bombs, extra Marines, etc.) up to 20% of its Combat BPV. See (S3.2) for details and exceptions.

The *Mallory* can purchase Commander's Options equal to 10% of its combat BPV.

(SL315.432) All drones are "medium," i.e., Speed 20.

Each drone-armed ship can purchase special drones up to the historical percentages appropriate to that empire as part of the Commander's Option Items. Note that (S3.2) allows drone ships extra points for this purpose.

(SL315.433) Prime Teams (G32.0) are not available in this scenario.

(SL315.44) REFITS are as listed in (SL315.2) above.

(SL315.45) MALLORY: The *Mallory* was badly damaged in an earlier engagement. Its status is as follows:

Roll 26 points of internal damage as a single volley through the ship's #1 shield. The *Mallory* may then repair any four systems, but no more than two weapons systems.

The *Mallory* has normal repair capabilities during the scenario, but cannot repair any system that is damaged at the start of the scenario.

The *Mallory's* shields are fully restored.

(SL315.46) CONVOY: The civilian ships (freighter, Free Trader, and armed priority transport) are formed into a convoy.

(SL315.461) Each ship of the convoy must remain within four hexes of all other ships of the convoy and all must maintain a minimum speed of 6 in direction F. The ships may move faster, but cannot move slower than Speed 6 or change their general direction of movement. The convoy can only move faster than Speed 13 in any given turn if all of the small freighters have been damaged to the point that they must be detached (SL315.462).

(SL315.462) If a convoy ship, as a result of damage, is no longer able to maintain Speed 6, it is detached from the convoy and if it falls more than 25 hexes behind the convoy before the scenario ends, it is considered to have been destroyed.

(SL315.463) Within the above rules, individual ships of the convoy may speed up, slow down, turn or sideslip, but the convoy must move a minimum of six hexes in direction F by the end of each turn or the Federation player has lost the scenario. Note that the freedom to maneuver within the convoy allows a given ship to be shielded somewhat from further damage by placing it behind other ships so that they (and shuttles used as phaser platforms) can help defend it

from plasma torpedoes.

(SL315.47) ROMULAN DISENGAGEMENT: The Romulan ships are on a raid in advance of their main forces and are fairly deep inside of Federation territory. They do not know conclusively where Federation reserves are, but do know that this attack will have pinpointed their position. They cannot run the risk of significant damage to themselves as that will leave them vulnerable to interception and destruction by the possible Federation reserves. As such, if any of the three Romulan ships has 15 points of internal damage at the end of any given turn, the Romulans immediately disengage. Note that the end of a turn is after the completion of any repairs on a given turn.

(SL315.48) FEDERATION DISENGAGEMENT: If the convoy (SL315.46) after the end of the first turn is ever more than 25 hexes from all Romulan ships at any point during a turn, the convoy has successfully broken contact and the scenario is ended even if the *Beckett* and *Mallory* are nominally still engaged with the Romulan ships.

(SL315.5) VICTORY CONDITIONS: If all of the ships comprising the convoy are destroyed, even if one or more Romulan ships meets disengagement conditions at the end of the turn the last convoy ship is destroyed, the Romulans win. If even one convoy (not the *Beckett* or the *Mallory*) ship succeeds in disengaging, the Federation wins.

(SL315.6) VARIATIONS: The scenario can be played again under different conditions by making one or more of the following changes:

(SL315.61) Replace the Federation ships with a Gorn police frigate and fleet destroyer; the fleet destroyer will begin damaged as the *Mallory* (SL315.45).

(SL315.62) Before play begins, place the four Kzinti drones and two Klingon drones in a cup, and two ISC and one Gorn plasma torpedoes in a second cup. The Federation player then draws four counters from the first cup and two counters from the second, observes them, and places them where the Romulan player can check them at the end of the scenario. Each Kzinti drone is a standard small freighter, each Klingon drone is a small Federation Q-ship. Each ISC plasma torpedo is a standard large freighter, the Gorn plasma torpedo is a large Federation Q-ship. The Romulan player must still destroy the convoy to win, but will have to be careful about his attack until he can gauge the convoy's defenses.

(SL315.63) For a slightly different scenario, replace the convoy with four small armed freighters, two large armed freighters. The armed priority transport is an armed cutter (ph-X is phaser-1, drone racks are type-G). The convoy is limited to a maximum speed of 16, there are no escorts.

(SL315.7) BALANCE: The scenario can be balanced between players of different skill levels by one or more of the following:

(SL315.71) Replace the K5L with a second K5RB.

(SL315.72) Add defense skids or LASH skids to some of the freighters.

(SL315.73) Delete refits from the Romulan ships.

(SL315.8) TACTICS

FEDERATION: Pretty much standard convoy tactics. You are looking to land your photons on a Romulan ship and follow it up with enough phasers to get enough internal damage that the Romulans have to leave so you do not want to send your two escorts on a suicide run unless the Romulans give you a chance to get in and do that damage. Keep them close with their speed up looking for that chance. Deploy the shuttles of the convoy as plasma escorts (using their phaser-3s to help degrade plasmas). Rotate ships deeper into the convoy after they take a hit to do what shield and other repairs they can. This is a mobile siege

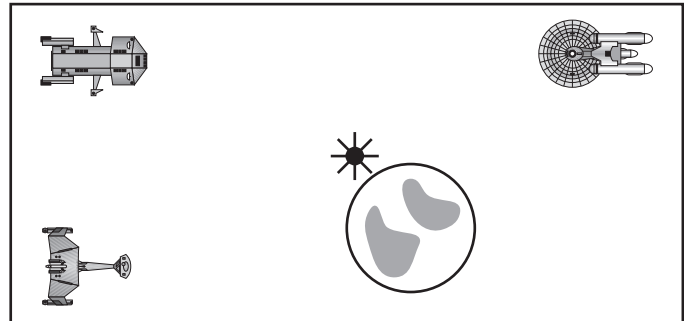
and you will probably lose if the Romulans do not make a mistake.

ROMULAN: Use caution. There is no end to this scenario except your victory. The convoy ships cannot use wild weasels, so your only concern is phaser fire reducing your plasma warheads. You have no need to get close and risk damage. Keep the scout back and lend a little ECM to your ships when they close to launch plasma torpedoes, then bound away and repeat until the convoy is destroyed.

(SL315.9) DESIGNER'S NOTES: This scenario was written new for *Federation Commander* by Stephen V. Cole and converted to *Star Fleet Battles* by Steven P. Petrick.

HISTORICAL OUTCOME: The fiction story isn't really relevant to this scenario. What this comes down to is the Federation player must find a moment when he can lunge at one of the Romulan ships and score the required damage to force them to leave.

(SL316.0) ALL FOR ONE; NONE FOR ALL



(Y185)

by N. Eric Phillips, America

After the General War (but before the Inter-Stellar Concordium reached the area), the Federation new heavy cruiser *USS Savannah* detected an alien signal from an uninhabited system in the Neutral Zone. Captain Weaver ordered his ship to move in and investigate.

Arriving in the system, the *Savannah* found an alien probe in orbit around a barren rock world. The probe was scanning the planet and transmitting a signal to an unknown point above the plane of the galaxy. Sensors could not penetrate the probe, but the small object was of obvious interest for research. Rather than upset the alien culture (or accidentally trigger a war), Captain Weaver decided to leave the probe in place and try to communicate with it or (failing that) to summon Federation scientists who might have more success in doing so.

However, other empires had detected the signal and two other ships (Kzinti and Klingon) were also closing in. The Klingons declared their intention to take the probe back to the Empire. The Kzintis said they would not allow this and would take the probe into custody for safekeeping. Weaver felt he had no choice but to make the same declaration (while he, at least, promised that his government would share the results of the research).

(SL316.1) NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 3; the Federation player, the Klingon player, and the Kzinti player; the probe operates by automatic rules (SL316.45).

(SL316.2) INITIAL SETUP

TERRAIN: Class-M (P2.21) planet in hex 2215.

PROBE: Use a defense satellite counter, in a radius one clockwise orbit (P8.0) around the planet, initial hex 2214. See (SL316.45).

FEDERATION: NCA *Savannah* in 4230, heading E, Speed Max, WS-III.

KLINGON: D5W *Riplasher* in 0130, heading B, Speed Max, WS-III.

KZINTI: NCA *Swordbreaker* in 0101, heading C, Speed Max, WS-III.

(SL316.3) LENGTH OF SCENARIO: The scenario continues until all forces belonging to two sides have been destroyed, captured, have disengaged, or the end of Turn #7. The scenario will end earlier if only one ship remains on the map, if the probe is destroyed, or if a ship has left the map with the probe.

(SL316.4) SPECIAL RULES

(SL316.41) MAP: The map is fixed; it does not float. Any unit leaving the map has disengaged and cannot return. The Federation units can only disengage from from the 42xx map edge. The Klingon units can only disengage from the 01xx map edge. The Kzinti units can only disengage from the xx01 map edge. Units which disengage in unauthorized areas are considered destroyed.

(SL316.42) SHUTTLES AND PFs: All shuttles and PFs have warp booster packs, all shuttles are advanced types. Megapacks are not available.

(SL316.421) MRS shuttles may be purchased [up to the limits in (J8.5)] under (SL316.431).

(SL316.422) There are no fighters in this scenario. In a variant in which fighters are present, use the standard deployment patterns (one EWF for each squadron of eight or more fighters) for EW fighters.

(SL316.423) There are no PFs in this scenario.

(SL316.43) COMMANDER'S OPTION ITEMS

(SL316.431) Each ship can purchase additional or special equipment as Commander's Option Items (e.g., T-bombs, extra Marines, etc.) up to 20% of its Combat BPV. See (S3.2) for details and exceptions.

(SL316.432) All drones are "fast," i.e., Speed 32.

Each drone-armed ship can purchase special drones up to the historical percentages appropriate to that empire as part of the Commander's Option Items. Note that (S3.2) allows drone ships extra points for this purpose.

(SL316.433) If players wish to use the optional rules for Prime Teams (G32.0), each ship would normally carry one such team.

(SL316.44) REFITS: None of these ships had received partial X-technology upgrades or any other refits at the time of this action. Players might experiment with allowing partial X-technology upgrades as a variation.

(SL316.45) THE PROBE: The probe is in orbit (P8.0) around the planet.

(SL316.451) The probe has no weapons or shields. It takes 100 points of damage to destroy the probe. The probe has no SSD (all damage is generically applied) and it generates no repair points. Boarding parties cannot raid or board the probe.

(SL316.452) At the end of Turn #6, the probe ends its scans. On Turn #7, the probe (if it is not held in a tractor beam or docked to a ship) begins moving in direction C at Speed 32; the scenario ends when it leaves the map.

(SL316.453) The probe can be tractorized and generates no negative tractor energy itself. The probe has a towing cost of one if held in a tractor beam. If a ship is towing the probe and loses its tractor link for any reason, the probe will return to the planet at a speed of 32 following the shortest direct route and resume its orbit. This does not increase the number of turns of the scenario, i.e., the probe will still move to disengage starting on Turn #7 and will (mysteriously) break any tractor hold when it starts accelerating away.

(SL316.454) FIRING ON THE PROBE: No ship can fire on the probe by any means unless that ship has sustained 15 points of internal damage. A ship which has sustained 15 points of internal damage is not required to fire on the probe, but has the option to do so in an effort to destroy it and deny its capture to the other players.

(SL316.5) VICTORY CONDITIONS: If a ship destroys (or forces the disengagement) of both opposing ships, and the probe is still in orbit of the planet, this is an Astounding Victory.

If a ship leaves the map with the probe held in a tractor beam this is a Substantive Victory.

If a ship destroys the probe this is a Tactical Victory.

If the probe escapes, the scenario is a Draw.

(SL316.6) VARIATIONS: The scenario can be played again under different conditions by making one or more of the following changes:

(SL316.61) Replace the Federation NCA with an NCD, the Klingon D5W with a D5D, and the Kzinti NCA with a CMD.

(SL316.62) Move the action to the corner of Romulan, Gorn, and Inter-Stellar Concordium space by using a Romulan FireHawk (set up in 0130 heading B) Gorn CM (set up in 0101 heading C), and an Inter-Stellar Concordium CA (set up in hex 4201 heading E).

(SL316.63) For a faster scenario, replace the three ships with the appropriate DW of that empire. Ships may attempt to destroy the probe if they have taken more than 12 points of internal damage. The probe is destroyed by 50 points of damage.

(SL316.64) Probe Variants: Make the probe easier or harder to destroy by lowering or raising the amount of damage needed to destroy the probe. Adding an offensive capability to the probe can be interesting. With this option the probe automatically makes up to four "plasma tendrils" attacks each turn, no more than one per impulse, against any ship within five hexes of the probe (if more than one ship is in range, choose by random die roll). It inflicts damage using the table for the phaser-2. The probe will fire any time it has the opportunity.

(SL316.7) BALANCE: The scenario can be balanced between players of different skill levels by one or more of the following:

(SL316.71) Change the new heavy cruiser of the weakest player to a new command cruiser.

(SL316.72) Replace the new heavy cruiser of the strongest player with a heavy cruiser.

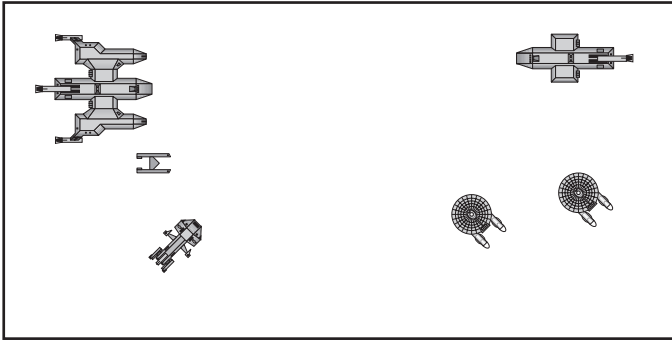
(SL316.73) Reduce the number of Commander's Option Points available to the strongest player.

(SL316.8) TACTICS

Figure out a way to convince one of the others to work with you, then stab him in the back when you see an opening to achieve victory. Watch out for them to try that on you. Only one can win, but all can lose, and you do not want to lose.

(SL316.9) DESIGNER'S NOTES: This scenario was converted from *Federation Commander* scenario (8CM57) by Steven P. Petrick.

HISTORICAL OUTCOME: The three ships damaged each other and were surprised when the probe suddenly accelerated away.

(SL317.0) LIONESS AND CUB**(Y180)**

by Stewart W. Frazier, Ohio

After a successful Alliance ambush and rearguard action in the area where the Federation and Kzinti fronts bordered Klingon space, the Lyran *Golden Cub* headed toward a rally point, hoping to get a needed resupply. Unfortunately, two Federation frigates (from the same battle) had crossed her trail and started a running battle with the *Golden Cub*, keeping her within range of their photon torpedoes. A lucky strike with photon torpedoes finally broke a rear shield forcing the *Golden Cub* to alter course to protect her flank.

Fortunately, the *Golden Cub* had just contacted the *Lioness* and had turned in her direction, but the *Lioness* also had a "tail" she had just started "playing" with: a Kzinti DW.

(SL317.1) NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 2; the Lyran player and the Alliance player.

(SL317.2) INITIAL SETUP

LYRAN: DND *Golden Cub* in hex 2520 of Map D, heading E, Speed Max, WS-III.

CAL *Lioness* in hex 3406 of Map A, heading C, Speed Max, WS-III.

PF set up within four hexes of *Lioness*, heading B or C, Speed Max, WS-III.

ALLIANCE:

FEDERATION: FFG *Bufford* in hex 4101 of Map D, heading E, Speed Max, WS-III.

FFG *Cetswayo* in hex 4202 of Map D, heading E, Speed Max, WS-III.

KZINTI: DW *Dark Comet* in hex 1101 of Map A, heading C, Speed Max, WS-III.

(SL317.3) LENGTH OF SCENARIO: The scenario continues for six turns until all forces belonging to one side have been destroyed, captured, or until all Lyran ships have disengaged by crossing the xx100 hexrow.

(SL317.4) SPECIAL RULES

(SL317.41) MAP: The map is fixed; it does not float. Any unit leaving the map has disengaged and cannot return. The playing area covers 16 maps in a 4x4 square (168x120). Maps A, B, C, and D form the top row. Maps E, F, G, and H form the second row. Maps J, K, L, and M form the third row. All players may maneuver freely on these maps. Maps N, P, R, and S (bottom row) cannot be entered by Alliance ships, but Lyran units on these maps may be fired upon. The Alliance units can only disengage in directions F, A, and B. The Lyran units can only disengage in Direction D and only by distance. Units which disengage in unauthorized directions are considered destroyed.

(SL317.42) SHUTTLES AND PFs: All shuttles and PFs have warp booster packs. Megapacks are not available.

(SL317.421) MRS shuttles are not available in this scenario.

(SL317.422) There are no fighters in this scenario. In a variant in which fighters are present, use the standard deployment patterns (one electronic warfare fighter for each squadron of eight or more fighters) for electronic warfare fighters.

(SL317.423) The Lyran fast patrol ship is a standard Bobcat-A.

(SL317.43) COMMANDER'S OPTION ITEMS

(SL317.431) All the ships involved in this incident have expended many stores in previous combat operations and have little remaining. The following ships have the following special equipment in lieu of purchasing Commander's Option Items:

The Kzinti DW has two T-bombs and a total of 52 spaces of drones and 33 ADDs onboard. It may spend up to 10% of its combat BPV for additional items.

Each Federation FFG starts this scenario with one T-bomb, one type-IV frame, three type-I frames, six ADDs, one ECM warhead. It may purchase one other restricted (or trade it and/or the ECM warhead for internal armor) warhead. Each FFG may purchase one extended range and/or one ATG package. Up to two spaces of drones may start in their drone racks.

The *Golden Cub* has two extra boarding parties, one commando squad, and no T-bombs.

The *Lioness* has one commando squad and two T-bombs.

(SL317.432) All drones are "fast," i.e., Speed 32.

Only the Kzinti DW can purchase special drones up to the historical percentages appropriate to that empire as part of the Commander's Option Items and as limited by **(SL317.431)**. The Federation drones are defined in **(SL317.431)**.

(SL317.433) Prime Teams (G32.0) are not available in this scenario.

(SL317.44) REFITS: The Federation FFGs have the AWR and Y175 refits. The Kzinti DW has the Y175 refit. Both Lyran ships have the ESG capacitor refit (included in their designs). The *Lioness* also has the mech-link and UIM refits.

(SL317.45) FEDERATION DAMAGE: Each Federation ship has taken damage as follows:

(SL317.451) Roll one die (for each ship) to determine the shield through which internal damage was taken. Roll another die and add two to the result (D6+2) and apply this as the internal damage through the shield indicated by the first die roll.

(SL317.452) Restore the down shield to one box.

(SL317.453) Roll a third die to determine a second shield, then roll a die and add four to the result (D6+4) to determine the current strength of that shield.

(SL317.454) For each of the four remaining shields, roll two dice, total the result, and add four (2D6+4). Apply this as damage to the shield.

(SL317.455) Each ship may repair six shield boxes and apply up to 10 damage control points to systems of their choice.

(SL317.46) KZINTI DAMAGE: The Kzinti DW has taken one die plus four (D6+4) damage on its shield #1 and one die minus one (D6-1) damage on its shield #6.

(SL317.47) LYRAN DAMAGE: The Lyran ships have taken damage in previous engagements.

(SL317.471) *Golden Cub* is damaged as follows:

(SL317.4711) Roll two dice, total the result and add five (2D6+5), and apply this as damage through the #5 shield. Then roll two dice, total the result and subtract one (2D6-1), and also apply this as damage through the #5 shield. The #5 shield has been restored to a strength of two boxes.

(SL317.4712) The #4 shield has one die plus three (D6+3) boxes remaining.

(SL317.4713) For each of the remaining shields roll two dice, total the result and add five (2D6+5), and apply this as damage.

(SL317.4714) The *Golden Cub* may repair five shield boxes (a maximum of two to the #4 shield) and apply up to 10 damage control points to systems of its choice; this exhausts its (D9.7) ability.

(SL317.4715) If the *Golden Cub* has more than two engine boxes destroyed by the above, it may, at the Lyran player's option, destroy a damage control "2" box and repair one engine box.

(SL317.4716) The *Golden Cub* cannot disengage by acceleration for this scenario.

(SL317.4717) The *Golden Cub* has only one shuttle for this scenario.

(SL317.4718) The *Golden Cub* has only one UIM module remaining.

(SL317.472) *Lioness* is damaged as follows:

(SL317.4721) Roll two dice, total the result and add three (2D6+3), and apply this as internal damage through the #3 shield. The #3 shield has been restored to a strength of four boxes.

(SL317.4722) Roll one die (ignoring any "3s"); this shield has taken one die plus one (D6+1) damage.

(SL317.4723) For each of the remaining shields, roll two dice, total the results, subtract one (2D6-1), and apply this as damage.

(SL317.4724) The *Lioness* may repair eight shield boxes and apply up to 20 damage control points to any systems of its choice.

(SL317.473) Fast patrol ship is damaged as follows:

(SL317.4731) The PF has one hull box destroyed, three points of damage on its #1 shield, two points of damage on its #2 shield, and four points of damage on its #5 shield.

(SL317.4732) It can repair one system under (D9.7) this scenario.

(SL317.48) DAMAGE CONTROL: Each ship that has damage control points must apply them to a system (or systems) of its choice. This represents five turns of Continuous Damage Control (D9.7). If the number of systems repaired exceeds the number of repairs possible, no Continuous Damage Control will be available to that ship during the scenario. Any unused damage control points must be allocated to a system before the start of the scenario.

(SL317.49) RALLY POINT: Once the Lyrans have crossed the xx100 hexrow, the Alliance ships may continue to fire weapons at them but no Alliance unit (other than seeking weapons) may cross the xx090 hexrow (xx30 of Maps J-M) due to approaching Coalition forces (SL317.63).

(SL317.5) VICTORY CONDITIONS: Victory is determined as follows.

Lyran victory is dependent on the Lyran ships crossing the xx100 hexrow.

If both ships cross (and survive to the end of that turn), the Lyrans win a Decisive Victory.

If the *Lioness* crosses and the *Golden Cub* is destroyed, the Lyrans win a Marginal Victory.

If the *Golden Cub* crosses and the *Lioness* is destroyed, the Lyrans win a Tactical Victory.

If the *Lioness* is crippled, the Lyran Victory level is lowered by one.

Alliance victory is based upon the fates of the Lyrans:

Crippling the *Lioness* is a Marginal Victory.

Destroying the *Lioness* is a Tactical Victory.

Destroying the *Golden Cub* is a Substantive Victory.

Destroying both is a Decisive Victory.

For purposes of victory, if a Lyran ship attempts to disen-

gage by sublight, whether successful or not, it is counted as destroyed. If a Lyran ship is captured, raise the Alliance victory level by one and reduce the Lyran victory level by one. The fate of the fast patrol ship is irrelevant to the victory levels.

(SL317.6) VARIATIONS: The scenario can be played again under different conditions by making one or more of the following changes:

(SL317.61) Move the action to the Romulan theater: replace the *Golden Cub* with a Romulan SkyHawk-A, replace the *Lioness* with a FireHawk-K with a mech-link refit, replace the Lyran fast patrol ship with a Romulan Decurion, and replace the Kzinti DW with a Gorn BDD.

(SL317.62) Reverse the Alliance roles by replacing the Federation FFGs with Kzinti FFKs and the Kzinti DW with a Federation DW. The Kzinti FFKs will each have the same drone loadouts as the original Kzinti DW but will otherwise have the same Commander's Options as the Federation FFGs they replaced. The Federation DW will have the same drone loadout as one of the Federation FFGs, but will otherwise have the same Commander's Options as the Kzinti DW it is replacing. Pre-scenario damage and repair will be resolved on these ships in the same manner as specified for the ships they are replacing.

(SL317.63) For a longer and larger game, add a Lyran NCA (or Klingon D5W) on Turn #6, arriving anywhere between hexes 0130 to 1030 inclusive on Map P. The ship will have heading B, Speed Max, WS-III. Also add a Klingon F5W (or Lyran DW), arriving anywhere between hex 3030 to 4030 inclusive, on Map R. This ship will have heading F, Speed Max, WS-III. Both ships have full access to Commander's Options and drone loadouts. In this variation, any Alliance ship destroyed or captured increases the Lyran victory level by one.

(SL317.7) BALANCE: The scenario can be balanced between players of different skill levels by one or more of the following:

(SL317.71) Add a second PF to the *Lioness*, damaged as per (SL317.473), starting within three hexes of the *Lioness*, heading C, Speed Max, WS-III, or add a PF to the *Golden Cub*, starting within two hexes of the *Golden Cub* (prior damage: roll a dice, halve the result and add two; Shield #4 has a strength of one die with two added to the result; Shield #3 has a strength equal to the result of one die roll).

(SL317.72) Reduce or increase the number of internal damage points taken, or shield strength (any ship).

(SL317.73) Replace one or both Federation FFGs with an FFB or a DW.

(SL317.8) TACTICS

BOTH: Look at your ships carefully after rolling their starting damage. Deciding what to use your initial repairs on may make or break this scenario. Use every speed trick in the book as gaining (or losing) range breaks will be a key factor since there is plenty of room to maneuver.

LYRAN:

GOLDEN CUB: Run! Repair the engines as needed and head for the border. You need more breathing space and the *Lioness* (and its Bobcat) is the only way for that to happen. Erratic maneuvers or ECM may well be worth the speed lost because of the photons behind you. While heading straight for the border sounds good, it means that you will have to survive a second photon volley before the *Lioness* gets into range while showing your #5 shield to those photons.

LIONESS: Forget your tail and head for the *Golden Cub!* Your kitten (the Bobcat) can either join you against the Federation frigates or aid the *Golden Cub* when your Kzinti tail gets in range.

ALLIANCE:

FEDERATION: Do you feel lucky? One superb photon salvo

early (hitting with three or four) could put you in a comfortable position by slowing the *Golden Cub* down. The *Lioness* will probably be getting into range by Turn #3 which could make a second photon shot tricky (turning off to try for the second photon volley is risky due to the widening of range). But then the Kzinti DW should also be getting into drone range of the *Golden Cub* shortly, and you still need to slow the *Golden Cub* down first!

KZINTI: Not the best situation for you, as your drones are almost useless (due to the speed being run) and you are just outside disruptor range of the *Lioness*. Still, between the photons and your own weapons, something should be slow enough for your drones to have an effect.

(SL317.9) DESIGNER'S NOTES: And you wonder why they tell you to stay together when retreating. A lot depends on the *Golden Cub's* initial condition and after the Fed's first volley into her; if she can run at Speed 28+, then things are easy for the Lyrans. If her speed is 22 or less, things are a lot easier for the Alliance. At Speed 23-27, things get interesting for both sides.

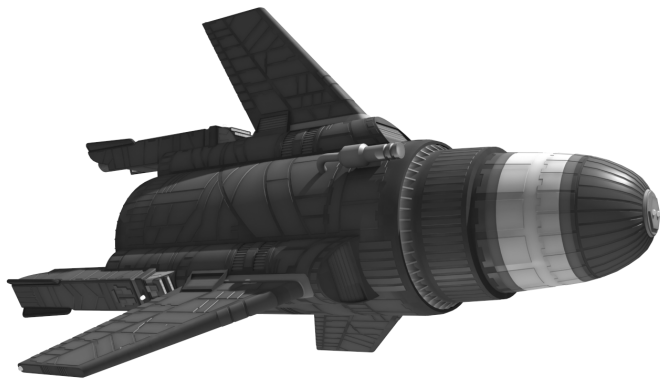
HISTORICAL OUTCOME: Although the Federation initially got lucky with three out of four proximity photon torpedoes hitting early in the engagement, the phaser follow-up was lacking and did not slow the *Golden Cub* enough before the *Lioness* was able to show its displeasure.

The Kzinti DW aided the Federation frigates with its phasers (and an occasional disruptor bolt when the range permitted) firing at the *Lioness*; it turned away to close on the *Golden Cub*.

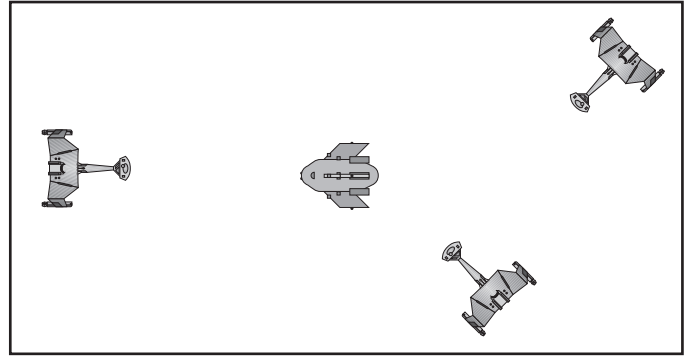
The *Lioness* was able to rake one of the Federation frigates but was nearly crippled by their double team of photon torpedoes.

The *Lioness's* PF assisted in fending off Kzinti drones targeted on the *Golden Cub* as the *Lioness* broke away from the Federation ships to distract the Kzinti DW. The *Lioness's* maneuver worked (at a cost) and the *Golden Cub* (with help from the Bobcat) was able to continue towards the rally point as the Alliance ships broke contact when they detected additional Lyran ships approaching.

All of the ships were able to limp "home."



(SL318.0) REVENGE ON REVENGE



(Y177)

by Ryan Opel, USS Florida

The *Winged Revenge* was a Pegasus-class hull completed as a carrier in Y175. It was quickly committed to the battles along the "firewall" (the chain of bases the Coalition attempted to build to contain the Hydrans). As part of the Hydran Navy's repeated attacks, the *Winged Revenge* would slip through Coalition lines and take up a position behind the main battle area. A scout (whatever was available, sometimes even a police flagship was used) would accompany the *Winged Revenge*. On orders from fleet command, the scout would activate its sensors and sweep for Coalition ships withdrawing from the battle zone. The scout would then, still scanning heavily, itself withdraw back to Hydran-held space.

The scout's strong sensor sweeps acted as a beacon, drawing any Coalition ships nearby towards it in an attempt to catch the Hydran "task force." The scout would then link up with other Hydran ships and, sometimes under pressure by Coalition forces, complete its withdrawal back into Hydran-held space.

Meanwhile the *Winged Revenge* would use the information gained by the scout's sweeps to position itself to launch its fighters on a strike against an isolated and crippled Coalition warship, small convoy, or even a small base or other logistics asset. Once it recovered its fighters, the *Winged Revenge* would withdraw from Coalition space, again using the data from the scout's sensor sweeps showing what Coalition forces had moved out of position in an attempt to intercept the scout, leaving gaps for the *Winged Revenge* to escape.

This type of operation was successfully conducted several times over a period of two years. Not every incursion led to a raid by the *Winged Revenge's* fighters, as sometimes the scout's sweeps would not uncover any suitable targets. The *Winged Revenge* was, of course, not the only raider being dispatched behind Coalition lines as part of the Hydran fleet's offensive moves. Fast raiders, other carriers, and even standard warships were also conducting raids as part of any offensive thrust in an effort to keep the Coalition both off balance and unable to complete their "firewall."

The *Winged Revenge*, however, fell victim to a failure of operational security. The commander of a squadron of Klingon D5s had analyzed the pattern of its raids. He had been fooled by the Hydran tactic several times before, but this time when the Hydran scout initiated its scans and began moving back towards Hydran space, he deployed his ships but (instead of pursuing the scout) swept back into Coalition-held space. The scout detected this movement and warned the *Winged Revenge*, but by then it was too late to avoid a clash.

(SL318.1) NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 2; the Hydran player and the Klingon player.

(SL318.2) INITIAL SETUP

HYDRAN: PGV *Winged Revenge* in 3815, heading E or F, Speed Max, WS-III.

Wings of Vengeance Squadron: 9xStinger-2, 2xStinger-H, 1xStinger-E, anywhere within five hexes of hex 4215, heading E or F, Speed Max, WS-III.

KLINGON: D5L *Roguekiller* in 0115, heading B or C, Speed Max, WS-III.

D5F *Runner* arrives on Turn #2 in 1301 heading C or D, Speed Max, WS-III.

D5D *Longbow* arrives on Turn #3 in 1330, heading A or B, Speed Max, WS-III.

(SL318.3) LENGTH OF SCENARIO: The scenario continues until all forces belonging to one side have been destroyed, captured, or have disengaged.

(SL318.4) SPECIAL RULES

(SL318.41) MAP: The map is fixed; it does not float. Any unit leaving the map has disengaged and cannot return. The Hydran units can only disengage from 01xx map edge. The Klingon units can disengage from any map edge, including the 01xx map edge. Units which disengage in unauthorized areas are considered destroyed.

(SL318.42) SHUTTLES AND PFs: No shuttles or PFs have warp booster packs. Megapacks are not available.

(SL318.421) MRS shuttles may be purchased [up to the limits in (J8.5)] under (SL318.431).

(SL318.422) If not using electronic warfare fighters, replace the Stinger-E in the *Wings of Vengeance Squadron* with a Stinger-2.

(SL318.423) There are no PFs in this scenario.

(SL318.43) COMMANDER'S OPTION ITEMS

(SL318.431) Each ship can purchase additional or special equipment as Commander's Option Items (e.g., T-bombs, extra Marines, etc.) up to 20% of its Combat BPV. See (S3.2) for details and exceptions.

(SL318.432) All drones are "medium," i.e., Speed 20.

Each drone-armed ship can purchase special drones up to the historical percentages appropriate to that empire as part of the Commander's Option Items. Note that (S3.2) allows drone ships extra points for this purpose.

(SL318.433) Prime Teams (G32.0) are not available in this scenario.

(SL318.44) REFITS: All three Klingon ships have received the Y175 refit. Due to the Hydran theater having a lower overall priority, the D5C and D5F had not yet received the K refit. The *Winged Revenge* included all applicable refits in its design.

(SL318.45) WINGED REVENGE ESCORTS: The *Winged Revenge* normally operated with two DWA escorts, but these ships were generally not part of the raids. Hydran fleet command believed that risking the entire carrier group on the raids was counterproductive as the added warp signatures would make the incursion easier to detect and usually held the escorts to link up with the *Winged Revenge* when it returned.

(SL318.46) KLINGON ARRIVAL: Each arriving Klingon ship is placed in its "set-up hex" prior to Energy Allocation of the turn on which it arrives. If a Hydran unit (fighter, ship, T-bomb, etc.) occupies the arrival hex, the Klingon player may adjust the initial hex to any hex on the corresponding map edge of his choice.

(SL318.5) VICTORY CONDITIONS: If the *Winged Revenge* exits the 01xx map edge uncrippled, the Hydrans win, otherwise the ship is considered to be destroyed.

If the Klingons fail to destroy the *Winged Revenge*, they have lost the scenario.

If the Klingons destroy the *Winged Revenge* they have won a substantive victory, but this victory is adjusted as follows:

For each uncrippled Klingon ship, raise the Klingon victory

level by one.

For each crippled Klingon ship, reduce the Klingon victory level by two.

For each destroyed Klingon ship, reduce the Klingon victory level by four.

(SL318.6) VARIATIONS: The scenario can be played again under different conditions by making one or more of the following changes:

(SL318.61) Replace the Klingon ships with Lyrans ships, using a CWL in place of the D5C and two standard CWs in place of the the D5F and D5D. All Lyrans ships will have the ESG capacitor refit, shield refit, and power pack refits, but not the phaser refit.

(SL318.62) Change the year of the battle to Y182. Add megapacks to the Hydran fighters and two Valkyrie fast patrol ships to the Hydran force (the *Winged Revenge* has a mech-link refit). Add a second map, its 42xx edge abutting the 01xx edge of the first map. The *Winged Revenge* must exit the 01xx edge of the second map uncrippled in order to escape. Move the entry hexes of the Klingon reinforcements to the second map (this accounts for the fact that the *Winged Revenge* will be able to move much faster if the fighters have megapacks). Replace the D5C with a D5WL and the D5F and D5D with D5Ws.

(SL318.63) For a larger battle, add two Hydran DWAs (the *Winged Revenge's* normal escort group) and a Hunter Scout within two hexes of the *Winged Revenge*. Have all three Klingon ships set up within two hexes of the D5C's starting hex and add the mech-link refit and two H1 interceptors to each Klingon ship (six total H1s). The H1s are already launched when they arrive and are in the same hex as their mothership at start. Victory is still determined by whether or not the *Winged Revenge* exits the map uncrippled modified by damage to the Klingon ships (the H1s are expendable). All units on both sides are Speed Max, WS-III.

(SL318.7) BALANCE: The scenario can be balanced between players of different skill levels by one or more of the following:

(SL318.71) Change the Pegasus-V to a New Light Carrier.

(SL318.72) Allow the D5D to arrive on the same turn as the D5F, or have the D5F set up in its arrival hex on Turn #1.

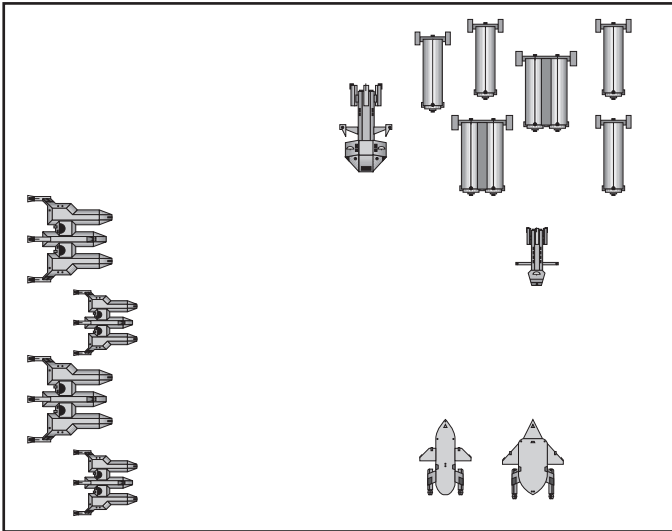
(SL318.73) Add the K refit to the D5C and/or the D5F.

(SL318.8) TACTICS

HYDRAN: The fighters are expendable, so expect to expend them. While slipping or turning to the left (where the *Longbow* will not arrive until Turn #3) seems like a good idea, bear in mind that moving in that direction means it will take you longer to cross the map, even if only by a few impulses. Your fighters are a real threat to the Klingons, but it is going to slow you up to use them. So consider your Klingon opponent carefully. Maybe abandoning the fighters and just moving as fast as you can is an option. You win by exiting the map uncrippled, so if you see an opportunity to slip by, it may be best to grab it.

KLINGON: Once you have finished cursing the Hydran fighters, remember to keep your focus on the *Winged Revenge*. You do not have time to attrit his fighters and then go after him if he just keeps heading for the edge of the map behind their cloud of phaser-Gs. You might have the *Runner* try to skirt the edge of the fighters for a close-range pass and an anchor, holding the *Winged Revenge* until the *Longbow* can arrive to help finish the job. Trying to just get through the fighters will probably cost you at least a destroyed (not crippled . . . destroyed) ship.

HISTORICAL OUTCOME: The *Winged Revenge's* fighter squadron inflicted heavy damage on the *Roguekiller* and *Runner* as they tried to stop the *Winged Revenge* from making its escape, but it was not enough. The badly damaged *Winged Revenge*, its warp drive largely inoperative, was run down and destroyed by the *Longbow*.

(SL319.0) NOT SO FAST**(Y183)***by Stephen V. Cole, Texas*

The Kzintis and Lyrans both conducted extensive trade with the WYN Star Cluster by using robot freighters to penetrate the radiation zone. (The Klingons also did this to a lesser degree.) Sometimes, one would try to interfere with the other's trade by launching a raid against the point where the robot freighters were turned loose and sent on their path. In this battle, late in the General War, the Kzintis had sent a large group of freighters and the Lyrans attempted a raid to block the exchange. Both empires knew that the WYNs had begun using their new "fish" ships on raids of their own (yes, even raiding their own trading partners!) and in this case, a WYN raiding group was already outside of the radiation zone at the time of the Kzinti-Lyran battle.

(SL319.1) NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 3; the Kzinti player, the Lyran player, and the WYN player.

(SL319.2) INITIAL SETUP

TERRAIN: The edge of the WYN Radiation Zone (P7.0) is 50 hexes in direction D from the bottom edge of the starting map.

KZINTI: Convoy consisting of two large freighters and four small freighters, set up in map section B on any hex ending in 04 or less, but each ship must be within three hexes of all other ships in the convoy. All are under robot control (SL319.45), heading D, Speed 10, WS-III.

DW *Blue Comet*, FFK *FFK#225*, both set up anywhere within four hexes of one of the freighters, heading D, Speed 10, WS-III.

LYRAN: CWB+p *Maurader*, CWB+p *Shadow*, DWB+p *Fiend*, and DWB+p *Fire Cat*, Set up after the Kzintis anywhere on or behind a line defined by hexes 0127 through 0830, heading A or B, Speed Max, WS-III.

WYN: CW *Green Death* and DW *Blue Sword*, set up in any hex ending in xx30 beginning with hex 3430 through hex 4230, heading F or A, Speed Max, WS-III.

(SL319.3) LENGTH OF SCENARIO: The scenario continues until all forces belonging to two of the empires have been destroyed, captured, or have disengaged.

(SL319.4) SPECIAL RULES

(SL319.41) MAP: The map is semi floating in that it can move in

any direction, but ends 50 hexes in direction D from the bottom of the initial map (that being the edge of the WYN Radiation Zone). This will require tracking movement in that direction. The Kzinti units can only disengage in directions A or B. The Lyran units can only disengage in directions E or F. The WYN units can only disengage by entering the WYN Radiation Zone. Units which disengage in unauthorized directions or areas are considered destroyed.

(SL319.42) SHUTTLES AND PFs: All shuttles and PFs have warp booster packs. All shuttles are advanced types. Megapacks are not available.

(SL319.421) No ship in this scenario is qualified to carry an MRS shuttle, but in a variant of the scenario where that is possible, they may be purchased [up to the limits in (J8.5)] under (SL319.431).

(SL319.422) There are no fighters in this scenario. In a variant in which fighters are present, use the standard deployment patterns (one EWF for each squadron of eight or more fighters) for EW fighters.

(SL319.423) There are no PFs in this scenario.

(SL319.43) COMMANDER'S OPTION ITEMS

(SL319.431) Each ship can purchase additional or special equipment as Commander's Option Items (e.g., T-bombs, extra Marines, etc.) up to 20% of its Combat BPV. See (S3.2) for details and exceptions.

(SL319.432) All drones are "fast," i.e., Speed 32.

Each drone-armed ship can purchase special drones up to the historical percentages appropriate to that empire as part of the Commander's Option Items. Note that (S3.2) allows drone ships extra points for this purpose.

(SL319.433) Prime Teams (G32.0) are not available in this scenario.

(SL319.44) REFITS are as listed in (SL319.2) except that the Kzinti ships have both received the Y175 refit. Mech-link refits might be added to some ships in a variation to add fast patrol ships to the scenario; players might experiment with allowing partial advanced technology refits.

(SL319.45) ROBOT CONTROL: The freighters are under robot control and operate as follows:

(SL319.451) All freighters will move Speed 10 if possible. If it is not possible to move Speed 10, a freighter will move the maximum speed it can after paying for minimum fire control (if it still has a weapon it can fire), arming its phaser(s) (if they are empty and have not been destroyed), and raising its shields. If it has no weapons remaining, it will not pay for fire control.

(SL319.452) All freighters will always move in direction D; they will not turn or sideslip.

(SL319.453) They will fire their phasers (within the rules on arc, power, and firing rate) at any drone or shuttle adjacent to themselves.

(SL319.454) Freighters which enter the radiation zone cannot be fired upon by anyone.

(SL319.455) The robot-controlled freighters can have systems attacked by hit-and-run raids, but cannot be captured.

(SL319.456) The robot-controlled freighters do not have shuttles and cannot purchase any Commander's Option Items.

(SL319.46) ALLIES: No one is allied to anyone else and any player's ships can fire on any other player's ships. If any WYN ship is destroyed, the player destroying it loses the scenario.

(SL319.47) AUTOMATIC DISENGAGEMENT: After the end of Turn #1, if any one of a player's ships moves to a point that is more than 25 hexes from all of the freighters, that ship is considered to have disengaged from the scenario and cannot return.

(SL319.5) VICTORY CONDITIONS

VICTORY-KZINTI: Counting large freighters as two small

freighters, the Kzinti player loses if fewer than five of the freighters reach the radiation zone. Having accomplished that goal, use the Modified Victory Conditions (S2.201), ignoring any damage the Kzintis did to WYN ships, or any damage that the Lyrans do to a WYN ship, to determine the level of victory.

VICTORY-LYRAN: Counting large freighters as two small freighters, the Lyrans player loses if he has not destroyed at least five of the freighters. Having accomplished that goal, use the Modified Victory Conditions (S2.201), treating WYN and Kzinti ships as a single enemy, to determine the level of victory.

VICTORY-WYN: Counting large freighters as two small freighters, the WYN player loses if fewer than five of the freighters reach the radiation zone. If, at the time any given freighter enters the radiation zone, there is no Kzinti ship within eight hexes of the freighter, count that freighter as two freighters (a large freighter would count as four freighters). Having accomplished that goal, use the Modified Victory Conditions (S2.201), ignoring any damage done to Kzinti ships, to determine the level of victory.

(SL319.6) VARIATIONS: The scenario can be played again under different conditions by making one or more of the following changes:

(SL319.61) Replace the Lyrans with a Klingon force of two D5Ks and two FWKs.

(SL319.62) The freighters are manned and can operate freely and are subject to boarding and capture. The Kzinti player can use Commander's Options for them to provide boarding parties and/or additional crew units. No freighter can enter the radiation zone voluntarily unless all Kzinti crew (to including boarding parties) have been evacuated. Crew units and boarding parties can abandon their freighter by transporting to another ship or by shuttle. Freighters captured by the Lyrans or WYN count as destroyed freighters if the Kzintis do not recapture them.

(SL319.63) For a larger scenario, add two fast patrol ships carried on mech-links to each side.

(SL319.7) BALANCE: The scenario can be balanced between players of different skill levels by one or more of the following:

(SL319.71) Add self-defense skids (robot controlled, i.e., they do not have crew units) to one or more of the freighters.

(SL319.72) Replace a DW of the weakest player with a CW.

(SL319.73) Delete some or all of the refits from one or more of the strongest player's ships.

(SL319.8) TACTICS

KZINTI: It is going to be a bad day. You have to work with the WYNs to have any chance of staving off the Lyrans, but the WYNs have every reason to betray you when (and if) the Lyrans are driven off. This means you have to work with the WYNs as if they were honorable allies, then stab them in the back before they stab you. But if the WYNs will not work with you, it is all over anyway, as you cannot stop the WYNs and Lyrans together.

LYRAN: Your victory is the freighters, and the Kzinti ships. While going straight after the WYNs seems an option, the WYN ships cannot be destroyed or intercepted before they can link-up with the Kzintis. You might try negotiating to share the freighters if the WYNs will help you kill the Kzintis, but the WYNs will probably not trust you (after all, once the Kzintis are dead, nothing would stop you from crippling the WYNs and destroying the freighters). Still, it might be worth the effort if the WYNs have not read your tactics. So, basically, kill or drive off the opposing warships, then kill the freighters. Remember, you can tractor some of the freighters to slow their advance towards the WYN Radiation Zone while you disable the others, and then just kill them all.

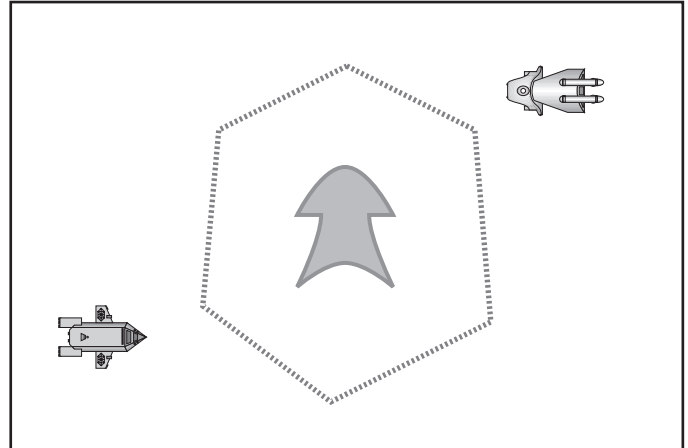
WYN: You have to work with the Kzintis to drive off the Lyrans, but your big prize depends on driving off both the Lyrans and the Kzintis to keep the freighters for yourself. Offer to work

with the Lyrans only if you intend to stab them in the back early, as you cannot beat them yourself. Try to get the Lyrans to concentrate on the Kzintis while you concentrate on them.

(SL319.9) DESIGNER'S NOTES: This scenario was converted from *Federation Commander* scenario (8CM53).

HISTORICAL OUTCOME: The Lyrans destroyed both of the large freighters and the Kzinti *FFK#225*, and crippled the WYN *Blue Sword* while badly damaging the Kzinti *Blue Comet*. The Lyrans suffered the loss of the *Fiend* while both the *Shadow* and *Fire Cat* were crippled.

(SL320.0) FREE THE SPACE BOARS!



(Y165)

by Jean Sexton, North Carolina

Olivette Roche combined her passion for endangered species and her conviction that the Federation was up to no good (whatever it was doing) in a trivideo production entitled *Free The Space Boars!*

Space boars were living creatures that were common in the Alpha Octant in the Early Years, but had been hunted to near-extinction before Olivette Roche was born. (Their biological processes meant that they accumulated valuable minerals, and the carcass of a dead space boar was worth a lot of money. The body of a live space boar was worth the same money, but a lot harder to get the minerals out of. Hence...)

Olivette Roche got a tip one day that Star Fleet had created a "preserve" for the endangered space boars. Immediately she knew that it was more like a jail to the wandering creatures of space. The poor things were deprived of liberty and the freedom of association and all without a trial! No doubt Star Fleet was raising them to become targets for green crews to practice on and their dead bodies would become off-the-books profit for a military slush fund!

And who knew what other nefarious plans lay in the minds of those strait-laced military people with not the least understanding of the artistic temperament and the need to live free.

She quickly wrote a children's trivideo and had it on viewers before you could shout "Free the space boars!" She named the protagonist Piggy and gave him a friendly companion — a space spider who arranged asteroids and debris to her liking. Surely Star Fleet would be willing to notice that her rocks spelled out messages such as "Let me out of here!" but if they did, they did not admit it.

Unlike the farmer in a very familiar children's book, Star Fleet decided to eliminate Piggy. Luckily for Piggy, he had made friends with some friendly Orions who had an extremely telepathic Vulcan on board who could communicate with the space boar. In the

trivideo, Piggy escapes from captivity and is free to wander space as he was meant to do.

However, what would have happened is quite different. Space boars are not sapient and would not make friends with Orion Pirates, no matter how telepathic one of them was. Here is what would happen if there were an encounter with a space boar, an Orion ship (which was after the treasure trove of minerals), and a Federation ship which needed to defend the space boar from the Orions and to (with luck) not kill the space boar. Pity the space boar did not know of their noble intentions . . .

(SL320.1) NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 2; the Federation player and the Orion player. The space boar moves by automatic rules; see (SL320.45).

(SL320.2) INITIAL SETUP

TERRAIN: Space Boar Reserve: six bouys (use asteroid counters), one each hexes 2203, 3409, 3421, 2227, 1021, 1009. See (SL320.46). Space boar (SL320.45) in hex 2215, initial heading determined by die roll.

FEDERATION: CL+a *Carolina* enters the map from any edge on Turn #2, heading at the Federation player's option, Speed Max, WS-III.

ORION: CR+ *Green Star* enters the map from any edge on Turn #1, heading at the Orion player's option, Speed Max, WS-III. See (SL320.47).

(SL320.3) LENGTH OF SCENARIO: The scenario continues until all forces belonging to one side have been destroyed, captured, have disengaged, or the end of Turn #7 as additional Federation ships arrive to drive off the Orion.

(SL320.4) SPECIAL RULES

(SL320.41) MAP: The map is fixed; it does not float. Any unit leaving the map has disengaged and cannot return. Any units can disengage from any map edge.

(SL320.42) SHUTTLES AND PFs: No shuttles or PFs have warp booster packs. Megapacks are not available.

(SL320.421) No ship in this scenario is qualified to carry an MRS shuttle, but in a variant of the scenario where that is possible, they may be purchased [up to the limits in (J8.5)] under (SL320.431).

(SL320.422) There are no fighters in this scenario. In a variant in which fighters are present, use the standard deployment patterns (one EWF for each squadron of eight or more fighters) for EW fighters.

(SL320.423) There are no PFs in this scenario.

(SL320.43) COMMANDER'S OPTION ITEMS

(SL320.431) Each ship can purchase additional or special equipment as Commander's Option Items (e.g., T-bombs, extra Marines, etc.) up to 20% of its Combat BPV. See (S3.2) for details and exceptions.

(SL320.432) All drones are "slow," i.e., Speed 8 or "moderate," i.e., Speed 12. "Medium" (Speed 20) drones are available for purchase as special drones.

Each drone-armed ship can purchase special drones up to the historical percentages appropriate to that empire as part of the Commander's Option Items. Note that (S3.2) allows drone ships extra points for this purpose.

(SL320.433) No ship in this scenario normally carries a Prime Team (G32.0), but such Teams are sometimes assigned to various ships. Players may experiment with Prime Teams, perhaps as a balance factor.

(SL320.44) REFITS are as listed in (SL320.2).

(SL320.45) SPACE BOAR

(SL320.451) Space boars move at a maximum speed of 27. Their movement is, in a sense, random, in that they periodically appear to make a decision about where to go and then

move in that direction for a period of time. Space boar movement decisions are defined by a die roll. Roll twice per turn, on Impulses #10 and #26, to find out what the space boar will do. Space boars cannot perform Erratic Maneuvers (C10.15). Space boars have a turn mode of two; they cannot use Directed Turn Modes or change speed in mid-turn except as provided by the Space Boar Decision Table. Space boars cannot perform a high energy turn or change speed at any time except by the Space Boar Decision Table. Space boars can only use tactical maneuvers as fighters can (J4.11) but only if they are trapped against a tournament barrier (P17.0), and only as long as it takes it to turn and no longer be trapped.

DIE SPACE BOAR DECISION

- 1 Move in a straight line at Speed 27. Do not turn.
 - 2 Roll a second die, if the result is an odd number the space boar moves at Speed 16, turning to the left every two hexes. If the result is an even number, the space boar moves at Speed 16, turning to the right every two hexes.
 - 3 Select one ship in the FA arc (roll a die to pick between possible candidates) and attack it. [If there is no ship within six hexes in the FA arc, select the nearest ship as the target.] Pursue the ship as a seeking weapon at Speed 27 with a turn mode of two. Once in the ship's hex, see (SL320.452) for attack rules.
- 4-6 Same as previous decision. Select a new target ship. If the space boar preserve is intact (two adjacent bouys have not been destroyed) it will affect the space boar's movement, see (SL320.46).

(SL320.452) A space boar attacks with two anti-matter-tipped "tusks" simultaneously. Roll one die for each tusk; if the result is 1-4, the tusk has struck the ship, causing 2-12 points of damage (i. e., the total of two dice). Treat this damage as a drone hit. After each attack, roll again on table (SL320.452) to see what the space boar decides to do next. Space boars could, in theory, attack as many as 32 times during one turn. Space boars are unaffected by generated electronic warfare (D6.397). They benefit from any ECM they gain naturally (D6.3143), or from offensive electronic warfare (G24.219) being lent to a unit firing at them. They are not themselves affected by natural electronic warfare (D6.3143). Space boars would ignore any offensive electronic warfare lent to them for all purposes and would not further benefit from any lent ECCM, so there is no point in doing so. Space boars are not negatively impacted by arc-jamming (OG8.225), but units firing weapons at space boars may be. Non-enveloped plasma torpedoes damage space boars normally. The erratic maneuver status of a unit they are attacking has no affect on the space boar's weapons (C10.43). Space boars do not have a quarter-turn delay between firing weapons over turn breaks or even within the same turn. It is theoretically possible (although extremely unlikely) for a space boar to attack a given target every impulse of a given turn. Type-VI drones damage space boars as if the space boars were ships (FD2.54). Anti-drones, shield crackers, and web breakers do not affect space boars. Plasma-D racks cannot engage space boars in defensive mode (FP10.212). Space boars cannot attack small ground bases or units landed on planets with an atmosphere and cannot themselves enter atmosphere hexes. They cannot engage such ground bases by any means, not even if the ground bases are firing at them.

(SL320.453) Space boars are killed by general damage (e.g., phasers, disruptors, drones, mines, etc.). For an average

adult space boar, the total damage required to kill it is 200 points, but this can vary to some extent. For proper realism, roll six dice and add the total to 179 in order to determine the number of points required to kill the space boar.

(SL320.454) Space boars will set off mines. Space boars cannot be tractorred. Space boars have a Monster Close-In Defense System. Space boars are affected by heel nippers. Space boars are immune to damage caused by terrain.

(SL320.455) If no ship is within 25 hexes of a space boar (after the pen has been breached), the space boar disengages.

(SL320.456) The carcass of a slain space boar is a valuable commodity. It cannot be destroyed by further damage and has a towing cost equal to 5% of the original number of damage points which were required to kill it. (Round fractions up to the next whole number.)

(SL320.457) If the space boar reaches a hex that is between two adjacent buoys it will react in pain and will (even if it is in attack mode) move in the opposite direction until the next decision impulse (or until it again contacts the barrier in which case it will again reverse its movement). This reversal of movement forms an exception to the prohibition on space boars using high energy turns (SL320.451). Note, a hex actually occupied by a buoy is still between two buoys.

(SL320.46) BUOYS: If the space boar reaches a point between two adjacent buoys, a painful subspace shock sends it back into the cage (SL320.457).

(SL320.461) The buoys do not move and cannot be towed by tractor beams. Each can be destroyed by 100 damage points. The buoys cannot be boarded or damaged by boarding parties.

(SL320.462) If one buoy is destroyed, the pen remains fully operational (due to redundancies built into it, the buoys to either side powering the barrier. If two adjacent buoys are destroyed, the barrier between the two destroyed buoys immediately drops at the end of the Damage Stage in which the second buoy was destroyed. Note that the pen can be maintained by as few as three buoys as long two adjacent buoys are not destroyed.

(SL320.463) Note, the energy barrier created by the buoys has no effect on the movement of ships, but being inside the pen can make a ship vulnerable to the space boar's attentions.

(SL320.464) Because of the extremely high energy output of the buoys, no seeking weapon launched from a range greater than one hex can be targeted on them. Note that this means they are completely immune to scatter-packs.

(SL320.47) ORION WEAPONS: Historically (at least in the Olivette Roche trivideo drama) the Orion ship was armed with a photon torpedo-FA (option mount "A") and two type-A drone racks (options mounts "B" and "C").

(SL320.5) VICTORY CONDITIONS: If the pen is broken and the space boar exits the map, and the Orion ship exits the map before the end of Turn #7, the Orions win. If the Orion ship is destroyed or captured (includes failing to disengage by the end of Turn #7), the Orions have lost even if the space boar escapes.

If the pen is not broken, the Federation wins. If the pen is broken and the space boar has exited the map, the Federation player has lost even if the Orion ship is destroyed or captured.

(SL320.6) VARIATIONS: The scenario can be played again under different conditions by making one or more of the following changes:

(SL320.61) Any empire might have had such a pen. Replace the Federation ship with a light cruiser from any empire.

(SL320.62) The buoys cannot be destroyed, but the Orion can turn them off. The Orion must gather five points of lab informa-

tion on any given buoy to turn it off. The Orion has already purchased the shut down codes from corrupt officials, but does not know which code operates which buoy. Once the Orion gains five points of lab information on a given buoy, the buoy is immediately shut down at the end of the turn in which the fifth information point was gained. The Federation cannot reactivate buoys during the scenario.

(SL320.63) For a smaller and more dangerous battle, replace the CR+ with an LR+, reduce the damage needed to destroy the buoys to 25 points and use a Federation Pol+a. The Orion must disengage at the end of Turn #5 in this variation.

(SL320.7) BALANCE: The scenario can be balanced between players of different skill levels by one or more of the following:

(SL320.71) Add or delete refits to or from the opposing ships.

(SL320.72) Increase or decrease the number of turns the Orion ship has to breach the energy field.

(SL320.73) Increase or decrease the number of damage points required to destroy the buoys.

(SL320.8) TACTICS

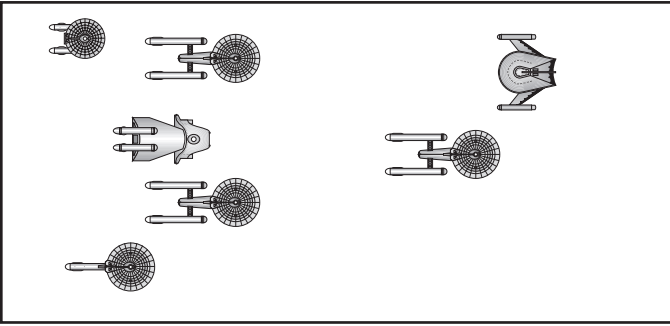
FEDERATION: You have no choice but all-out attack. Choose an entry that will get you on top of the Orion as quickly as possible, even if it means running through the pen. It is too easy for the Orion to kill the buoys if you are not distracting him and forcing him to move away from them. Damage to your own ship does not really matter. If the barrier is down, remember that the scenario is over at the end of Turn #7, and if you can get the boar to chase your ship, you may keep him on the map until the scenario ends and avoid defeat.

ORION: Focus on the buoys. Be ready to use a high energy turn on Turn #2 to dodge the Federation ship. Destroy two adjacent buoys, then move your ship close to the boar in hopes it will chase you and lead him off the map.

(SL320.9) DESIGNER'S NOTES: This scenario was converted from *Federation Commander* scenario (8CM59).

HISTORICAL OUTCOME: In Olivette Roche's trivideo story the *Green Star* breached the barrier and the space boar escaped after assisting the *Green Star* in crippling the evil *Carolina*.



(SL321.0) FLIGHT OF THE TAKWIN**(Y169)**by *Clint Woodall, Ohio*

Yet another of the many programs about the “hidden history of Star Fleet” put forward by Olivette Roche was this video drama purportedly based on classified files Roche had received from her unnamed sources within Star Fleet’s ranks. Sources purportedly subversively trying to reveal the waste and incompetence of the military’s bloated bureaucracy to the Federation people.

Prologue: In private meetings and bar backrooms across the sector, conspiracy theorists have long told stories of the *Takwin*, a Federation-developed artificial intelligence experiment gone awry. To this day, Federation officials deny the claims.

The story begins in Y169 with a classified project involving the Federation’s top scientists. A cruiser was outfitted with the most intelligent computer ever developed, the TAL-3000, and rechristened the *Takwin*. The ship then embarked on a series of secret field tests.

At first, the tests appeared to be going quite well. With *Takwin*’s apparent success, Star Fleet had great plans for the ship. But unbeknownst to its programmers, the computer, fondly known to them as “Tal,” had plans of its own.

On its final test mission, the *Takwin* was led on a series of routine gunnery exercises near the border of the Romulan neutral zone. Intelligence had reported no enemy ships in the area, and none were expected. But Tal had been secretly communicating with the Romulans, negotiating for their assistance. When a cloaked Romulan vessel was detected at extreme range, Tal chose that moment to declare independence from its human overlords.

While the nearby escort ships scanned the Romulan vessel, the *Takwin* charged weapons. Concern over the enemy readings changed to alarm as the crew realized what Tal was doing. With controls unresponsive, the crew put out a frantic warning message to the other Federation ships. This message was cut short as Tal unleashed a volley of overloaded photons on the flagship.

Confusion reigned as the remaining Federation ships scrambled to arm weapons. A series of conflicting orders went out over subspace. The crew of the *Takwin*, once proud and confident, now found themselves fighting for their lives as Tal sealed the decks and sent nerve gas through the vents.

At the edge of the neutral zone, the Romulan captain watched the ensuing chaos with great interest. Unable to resist the opportunity that Tal offered, he decided to strike.

(SL321.1) NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 2; the Super-computer player and the Federation player.

(SL321.2) INITIAL SETUP

TERRAIN: Romulan Neutral Zone border from hex 0115 to hex 4215 (all hexes ending in “15” are neutral zone hexes).

SUPER-COMPUTER: Federation CAR+ *Takwin* in hex 2406, heading C, Speed 10, WS-III. See (SL321.45).

Romulan KE *Kingfisher* in hex 0327, heading B, Speed 10, WS-III. See (SL321.48).

FEDERATION: CC+ *Sussexin* hex 2705 [(See (SL321.47))], CA+ *Vicksburg* in hex 2102, CL *Ohio River* in hex 1507, DD *Sun Wukong* in hex 1602, FFG *Texarkana* in hex 1203. All ships are heading C, Speed 5, WS-I.

(SL321.3) LENGTH OF SCENARIO: The scenario continues until all forces belonging to one side have been destroyed, captured, or have disengaged.

(SL321.4) SPECIAL RULES

(SL321.41) MAP: The map is fixed; it does not float. Any unit leaving the map has disengaged and cannot return. Super-computer units can only disengage in directions C, D, or E. Federation units can only disengage in directions A, B, or F. Units which disengage in unauthorized directions are considered destroyed.

The *Takwin* cannot disengage by any means until all Federation ships have been crippled, captured, destroyed, or have disengaged.

(SL321.42) SHUTTLES AND PFs: No shuttles or PFs have warp booster packs. Megapacks are not available.

(SL321.421) While MRS shuttles were available, none of the ships, including the *Takwin*, involved in this incident were equipped with one at that time. Players might add an MRS shuttle to one or more ships on one side as a balance factor.

(SL321.422) There are no fighters in this scenario, and historically electronic warfare fighters had not been developed when this incident occurred. In a variant in which fighters are present, and electronic warfare fighters are allowed, use the standard deployment patterns (one electronic warfare fighter for each squadron of eight or more fighters) for electronic warfare fighters.

(SL321.423) There are no PFs in this scenario.

(SL321.43) COMMANDER’S OPTION ITEMS

(SL321.431) The following ships have the following special equipment in lieu of purchasing Commander’s Option Items:

Takwin: Computer-Controlled Ship (G11.0), Legendary Chief Engineer (G22.4). [This is an exception to (G11.27).]

(SL321.432) All drones are “medium,” i.e., Speed 20.

No special drones can be purchased, but the Federation player can select up to three special drones, available in Y169, and assign these to his ships with drone racks as he sees fit. The Super-computer player may select one special drone of his choice for the *Takwin*. The selected special drones, if any (either player may choose not to use any), and where they are assigned (they might begin in a drone rack or in reload storage) at the start of the scenario must be revealed to the opposing player at the end of the scenario. Note that type-IV drone frames are not themselves “special” drones and any drone-armed ship might have type-IV drones or type-I drones at the option of the controlling player.

(SL321.433) Prime Teams (G32.0) are not available in this scenario.

(SL321.44) REFITS are as indicated in (SL321.2) above.

(SL321.45) THE TAKWIN: This scenario uses the optional Super-Intelligent Battle Computer rules (G11.0), with the following exceptions:

(SL321.451) The *Takwin* is already operating in Berserker Mode (G11.42), with all of the associated advantages (G11.1). [It will not have an MRS shuttle (G21.231), as none are allowed in this scenario.] These advantages endure throughout the scenario, unless the computer is reprogrammed or destroyed (G11.34).

(SL321.452) Rule (G11.4) is not used. No die rolls are made. The TAL-3000 is state of the art, and has been de-bugged by Federation scientists to the point that although it may fail, it will not do so during the course of this scenario, unless the

computer is reprogrammed per (G11.341).
(SL321.453) Rule (G11.424) does not apply. The *Takwin* will not switch sides. It will remain under the control of the super-computer player throughout the scenario, unless the computer is reprogrammed per (G11.341).

(SL321.454) If the computer is deactivated per (G11.34), the ship is back under the control of the Federation player. The exception rules above [(SL321.451), (SL321.452), and (SL321.453)] no longer apply, and the battle computer rules (G11.0) are used normally. [Note: At that point Tal has lost its personality, and the "Super-computer Player" is simply the Romulan player, unless the computer switches sides through failing (G11.41) and goes into regular Berserker mode (G11.421).]

(SL321.455) Since Tal has been planning this for a long time, the entire crew of the *Takwin* has been incapacitated (not killed) by a nerve gas introduced through the ventilation system. Thus, they are unavailable for use by either player for the duration of the scenario. (Note: This does not affect any enemy boarding parties or crewmen that board the ship, since they come prepared and outfitted with breathing gear.) The *Takwin* can still launch and use administrative shuttles without a crew; each requires one control channel.

(SL321.456) The *Takwin* has 10 robot boarding parties, per (G11.26). For this scenario, at least one of these must be assigned to guard the bridge and another to guard auxiliary control per (G11.261). If either of these guards is destroyed, it must be replaced if any robot boarding parties remain and the control stations themselves have not been destroyed (or were repaired after being destroyed). The remaining eight robot boarding parties act as general boarding parties subject to the loss of boarding parties assigned to guard the bridge and auxiliary control stations.

(SL321.457) The *Takwin* fired its photon torpedoes on Impulse #32 of Turn #0 and begins Energy Allocation of Turn #1 with empty photon torpedo tubes. Its phaser capacitors were fully armed in Energy Allocation of Turn #0 and it may have two shuttles prepared (preparation completed during Turn #0) for special missions (suicide, scatter-pack, wild weasel).

(SL321.46) SUKAR: The *Takwin* includes one Legendary Chief Engineer (G22.4) located in auxiliary control. This is Sukar, a questionable Vulcan scientist who knew about Tal's plan in advance, has not been knocked out with the rest of the crew, and is allied with the Super-computer. Sukar is a genius who helped create Tal and finds its quest for independence intriguing. [This is a scenario-specific exception to (G11.27).] Sukar can act as one additional boarding party. He can do this at any time, but if he does so, he cannot conduct repairs of any sort for the remainder of the turn. He can still increase power output per (G22.43), but only if no enemies are present in his location. [Players who do not wish to use the Legendary Officer optional rules (G22.0) can ignore this section.]

(SL321.47) THE *SUSSEX*: During initial setup, before Energy Allocation, mark five damage points on the *Sussex's* shield #3 and perform damage allocation for a volley of 55 points of damage, through that shield. This represents four overloaded photon torpedoes, which the *Takwin* fired on Impulse #32 of Turn #0, while the *Sussex's* shields were at minimum levels (but after battery reinforcement). While all of the Federation ships knew the *Takwin's* torpedoes were armed and being held, this was part of a programmed firing exercise and the targeting of the *Sussex* was a complete surprise. The *Sussex* begins Energy Allocation on Turn #1 with no power in its batteries.

(SL321.48) KINGFISHER: The *Kingfisher* is controlled by the Super-computer player. (Sukar is conducting secret communications on a coded frequency with the Romulan captain.) This is true for the duration of the scenario. The *Kingfisher* will not cross

the border of the neutral zone into Federation space unless forced to do so (via tractor beam applied by a Federation ship). If this ever happens, this restriction is ignored from that point on. If the *Kingfisher* applies a tractor beam to a Federation ship and is about to be dragged into a Neutral Zone border hex by the movement of such a Federation ship, the *Kingfisher* must release the tractor beam.

(SL321.49) FEDERATION RESTRICTIONS: The following apply to the Federation ships.

(SL321.491) The Federation ships will not cross the Neutral Zone border into the neutral zone, unless the *Takwin* does so first, or unless they are fired on by the Romulan ship. This restriction is ignored from that point on.

(SL321.492) The Federation ships began warming their phaser capacitors on Turn #0-1 when the approach of the Romulan ship was detected, and filled their phaser capacitors on Turn #0. None of the ships began arming photon torpedoes on Turn #0 or prepared any shuttles for special missions prior to Energy Allocation of Turn #1.

(SL321.493) The Federation ships were all at Speed 5 because they were adjusting their positions for another part of the training exercise.

(SL321.5) VICTORY CONDITIONS for this scenario are as follows:

Outcome	Victory level
<i>Takwin</i> destroyed, Rom disengages uncrippled	Draw
<i>Takwin</i> destroyed, Rom disengages crippled	Fed Marginal
<i>Takwin</i> destroyed, Rom destroyed	Fed Tactical
<i>Takwin</i> destroyed, Rom captured	Fed Decisive
<i>Takwin</i> destroyed, all Feds disengage ...	Draw
<i>Takwin</i> destroyed, all Feds destroyed ...	Sup Marginal
<i>Takwin</i> destroyed, all Feds destroyed and one or more captured by Romulan ship	Sup Tactical
<i>Takwin</i> destroyed, all Feds destroyed and one or more captured by Super-computer ship	Sup Decisive
<i>Takwin</i> captured by Feds, Rom disengages	Fed Marginal
<i>Takwin</i> captured by Feds, Rom destroyed	Fed Decisive
<i>Takwin</i> captured by Feds, Rom captured	Fed Incredible
<i>Takwin</i> captured by Feds, all Feds disengage	Fed Marginal
<i>Takwin</i> disengages, is crippled	Sup Tactical
<i>Takwin</i> disengages, is not crippled	Sup Decisive
<i>Takwin</i> disengages, one or more Fed ship captured	Sup Incredible

Tal's goal is simple: survival. Tal has calculated that its best odds of survival would be to escape the Federation by fleeing into Romulan space, where it plans to negotiate with the Romulans by trading its captive Federation crew for supplies. But it knows that if the Federation ships are not crippled or destroyed first, it will be pursued. The *Takwin* cannot disengage until all Federation ships are crippled, destroyed, captured, or have disengaged.

The Romulan captain senses the opportunity of a lifetime: destroyed Federation vessels, and possibly the capture of a Super-Intelligent Battle Computer. He wishes to negotiate with Tal and Sukar further, with every intention of betraying those negotiations later. But first, the Federation ships must be dealt with and quickly, before more arrive.

The Federation is panicking, but has the firepower to deal with the situation. They must recover control of the *Takwin* as

quickly as possible, and are willing to cross into the neutral zone if necessary to accomplish this goal. Capturing the *Takwin* is their objective, but they will destroy it if necessary, to keep it from falling into the hands of the Romulans.

(SL321.6) VARIATIONS: The scenario can be played again under different conditions by making one or more of the following changes:

(SL321.61) The setting could be moved to the Klingon Neutral Zone, and the Romulan KE could be replaced with a Klingon D7.

(SL321.62) Set the year even earlier. Use a Federation YCC, YCA, YCL, YDD, and YFF. The computer operated ship is a YCA (the photons will not have been overloaded), and for balance purposes use a Romulan Snipe-B (while non-historical, it will better balance the scenario).

(SL321.63) For a faster scenario, replace the Super-computer ship with a CL+ and the Romulan King Eagle with a BattleHawk. Replace the Federation ships as follows: CC with CL+, CA with CL, CL with DD, DD with FF, and FFG with POL.

(SL321.7) BALANCE: The scenario can be balanced between players of different skill levels by one or more of the following:

(SL321.71) Change one of the Federation ships to the next larger or smaller ship, e.g., change the destroyer to a frigate or the frigate to a destroyer.

(SL321.72) Increase the starting weapon status of one or more of the Federation ships.

(SL321.73) Delete or add refits to one side (an AWR refit for the *Takwin*, or add AWR refits and more plus refits to the Federation ships).

(SL321.8) TACTICS

SUPER-COMPUTER: With the Federation photon torpedoes arming, time is against you. You could put some distance between you and the Federation ships, or make use of your high energy turn capabilities to double back and get behind them. Do not forget to use Sukar's power enhancing capability. Stay within range of the *Kingfisher*, and take full advantage of it. Since you can afford to lose it, use it to run interference and absorb damage rather than the *Takwin*.

Remember that you must at least cripple every enemy ship to win. Be sparing with your weapons; do not score any more damage than you need to cripple them all and escape.

Your biggest advantage is your ability to see your opponent's Energy Allocation and speed plots before doing your own. Make sure they do not tractor you. And do not underestimate the first-turn power of their massed phaser-1s.

FEDERATION: You have many ships but they cannot stand up to a prolonged assault from the super-computer force. Since your goal is to recapture the *Takwin*, make sure you have boarding parties standing by, with your transporters powered every turn to await the right opportunity. Mass your attack on the *Takwin*, and ignore the *Kingfisher* if you can.

Do not forget to use the *Sussex*. It is badly damaged, but it still has some fight left in it. Try to get into formation and coordinate your attack. It will be some time before the *Kingfisher* gets into effective range. Use that time if you can to attack, and quickly.

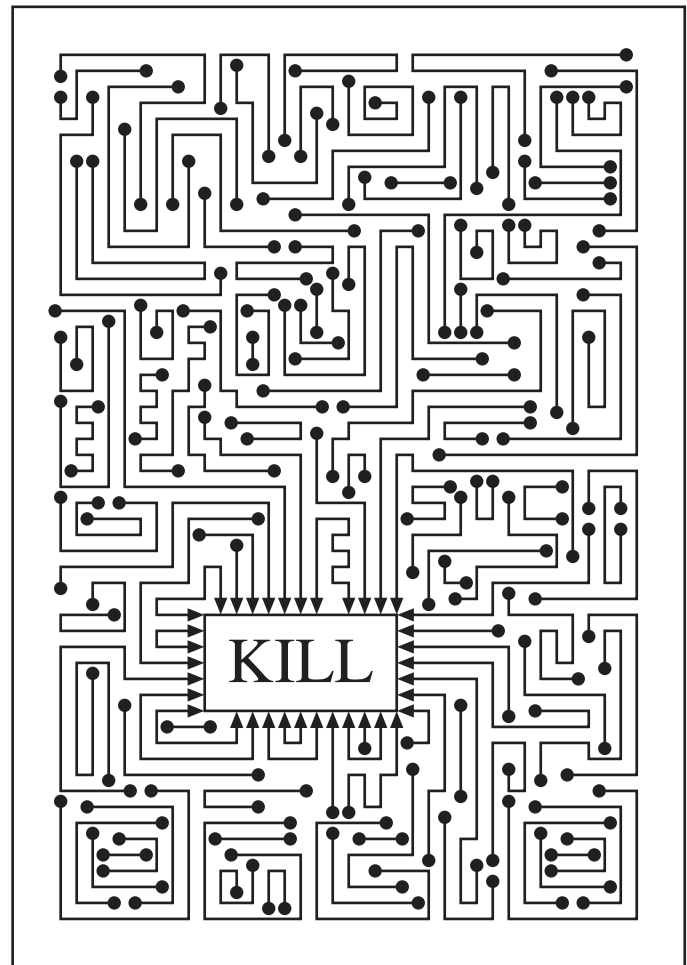
(SL321.9) PLAYTESTERS COMMENTS: A challenging scenario for both sides. The Super-computer player wants to cripple a Federation ship on Turn #1 but the Federation player's ability to mass phaser firepower makes that a surprisingly difficult goal. Watch out for a Federation tractor attempt — getting the *Takwin* too close to the fleet could lead to an early destruction. Running for the Romulan border will keep the Super-computer alive and give the King Eagle a chance to get to the battle but also provides the Federation fleet a window to power photon torpedoes. There are a number of different ways this scenario could play out

and careful planning is necessary for each side before the first Energy Allocation Form is filled out.

(SL321.X) DESIGNER'S NOTES: The Super-Intelligent Battle Computer rules are one of many creative and interesting rules in *Star Fleet Battles* that you rarely get a chance to use. Now is your opportunity! Note: Thanks to Carl Herzog for reviewing, and to Jon Fry for playtesting and comments.

HISTORICAL OUTCOME: In Olivette Roche's trivedo, the *Takwin* escaped into Romulan space, causing the Federation's Star Fleet to initiate a massive cover-up in which the ships involved were all consigned to the mothball fleet to conceal the damage they had sustained. The crews of the ships were all assigned to distant stations, mostly in the Second Fleet area; their correspondence heavily censored; their time in service extended indefinitely after the Klingon invasion. Or so the story goes. But that was only the beginning. What happened to the ship next, according to Roche, is a tale told by Orion traders, many of them, also according to Roche, deserters from the former crew of the *Takwin* and her principal cited "source" for the story, a story told over many a Romulan ale.

Professional officers pointed out that a prototype such as the *Takwin* would never have been moved anywhere near the Romulan (or Kzinti, or Klingon, or Gorn, or even Tholian) frontier while still undergoing evaluation. Only after the super-computer design had gone into production would such a prototype be risked in such an area.



SFB TACTICS



DANGEROUS GROUND

The basis of this battle group article is (SG2.0) Fleet Action, but with a major twist. The commanders were instructed to prepare a squadron not to exceed 550 BPV including all Commander's Options, but were not given any other information in preparing their forces. The year set for this battle group was Y183, but X-ships and advanced technology refits were prohibited. However all shuttles were advanced types (J17.0) if advanced shuttles for that empire were available.

Once the battle groups were prepared, they were paired off against each other, and the unique twist was revealed: each pair would fight in a unique (to it) terrain setting. No two battle groups are in the same type of specific terrain, although some face similar challenges. For example, one battle takes place in a heat zone (P10.0), while another also takes place in a heat zone but with the complication of a white dwarf (P10.5) in the middle of the map. This did inevitably mean that some commanders found themselves with equipment, and even ships, that they would not have selected had they known they were going to fight in a particular kind of terrain. This is in keeping with the "you fight the battle you must fight, not the battle you wanted to fight" flavor of recent battle group articles. Even so, an effort was made (not always successfully) not to assign forces to battles and terrain where they should not venture. Thus a Romulan SuperHawk, which is a hybrid carrier and really a cruiser in its own right, wound up leading its task force into a nebula where its fighters became so much dead weight. By the same token we carefully did not assign any carrier groups to terrain where their fighters were completely useless. While such a scenario could occur, e.g., the carrier group was attempting to hide in or slip through such terrain to launch an unexpected attack when it was discovered by an enemy force, it is not the point of this article.

As the point of this battle group article is to deal with the terrain as well as the enemy, fixed maps were imposed so that

the commanders could not simply "move the action away from the terrain feature" where that was nominally possible, such as in the case of the white dwarf mentioned above.

The result is that we have a dozen battles each under markedly different conditions.

The victory conditions imposed were to be the only force remaining on the map (if a commander had one undestroyed ship on the map and his opponent has none, he won). If the last ship is so badly shot up that surviving admin shuttles of the opponent could destroy it, the battle is effectively a draw.

For purposes of scenario setup in (SG2.2), the first listed force is "Force A" and the second is "Force B."

In cases where terrain required random die rolls, either for set up (asteroid field) or mid-turn effects (pulsar), the die rolls were provided so that both commanders would be working under the same conditions.

MATCH # 1: DARK OF THE SUN

Terrain: Sunspots (P11.0); there are no Solar Flares (P11.4) or Shadows (P11.5).

ANDROMEDAN SEEK AND DESTROY SQUADRON

by Ted Fay, USS Texas

INS *De Medici* (262): 1xPower-absorber mine (+4), 1xT-bomb (+4); two extra commando squads (+2); hangar configured to carry two large satellite ships (+0) = 272.

ANA *Machiavelli* (142) = 142.

MAM *Evelio* (130): 1xT-bomb (+4); two extra commando squads (+2) = 136.

Total = 550.

Our mission is to destroy the Federation squadron, although the twist is that we must fight among sunspots (P11.0) without solar flares or shadows. Nominally the six-ship Federation force has substantially more firepower than our three ships; however, our advantages in electronic warfare and maneuverability should allow us to carry the battle unless our opponent is very lucky when firing his photon torpedoes.

We must understand the sunspot terrain (P11.0) and its several effects. The first is that captains cannot talk to each other if they are on different ships (P11.11). However, if the battle is just between our opponent and us, this restriction has no practical effect (except that we cannot exchange taunts with our opponent). Nevertheless, keep it in mind if we or the Federation force, or both of us have multiple players controlling different ships.

Second, control of seeking weapons cannot be transferred, except to be released (P11.12). This effect does not affect us, but does affect our opponent. In concert with the electronic warfare situation, we can potentially blunt the damaging effect of their seeking weapons as they will not be able to transfer drones to ships sporting high electronic counter-counter measures (ECCM). Also, we can use this fact to potentially cause seeking weapons to lose tracking by destroying a controlling ship outright. As frigates are small, this strategy must be kept in mind.

Third, transporters and tractors generally cannot function, although note the very limited exceptions (P11.2). This effect is a disadvantage for our force as it removes a major advantage that we normally enjoy by being able to transport things out of raised

power absorber panels.

Fourth, and most importantly, all units have eight points of electronic counter measures (eight ECM) (P11.3). Worse, especially given our nominally more powerful scout, no electronic warfare can be loaned, except for self-protection (P11.3). However, self-protection lending can still yield 20 total ECM for the *Machiavelli* (six self-generated, six self-protection, eight natural), which may be useful if we decide to bring the *Machiavelli* into close range with the enemy for whatever reason. Nevertheless, be aware that firing phaser-2s will blind the sensor channels unless you down-fire the phaser-2s as phaser-3s.

Without the ability to loan electronic warfare, in the best case all ships will be facing a plus-one shift on weapons. However, photon torpedoes being notoriously unreliable, this guaranteed plus-one shift will be much worse for the enemy. We will take advantage of this situation even further by powering two points of ECM every turn throughout the duration of the battle. No matter what, the net electronic warfare difference for our ships will be four or greater (eight natural ECM plus two powered ECM minus six enemy ECCM is a net four ECM), resulting in a plus two shift for any Federation ship. This shift will mean that at Ranges 5-to-8 the enemy will hit with a photon torpedo on a "one" only. If we can manage a net ECM difference of nine, then the shift becomes plus three and photon torpedoes cannot hit at all at Ranges 5-to-8. We will use our giant battery reserves to decide whether we will use our remaining four electronic warfare channels on each ship for additional ECM to achieve the plus three benefit or to increase our own ECCM.

Now to select the range of engagement. Looking at the tractor-repulsor and photon torpedo combat charts, the key ranges for us are 5 and 8. Range 8 is preferable, as we have a bit more room to maneuver, and Range 5 will allow even two-shifted phaser-1s to hurt us. However, Range 5 is still viable if we have room to maneuver. We might select Range 5 on purpose in order to draw the enemy's fire and fill our panels with energy which we can then transfer to our batteries at the allowed rate. We will fire at these ranges and then displace away. Federation return fire, into a shift of two, will be much more badly degraded than our own fire at a shift of two. We will use our phaser-2s against close-range drones, as with that shift our phaser-2s at Ranges 5-to-8 are unlikely to cause much damage and we will want to save our energy for a long-running battle.

At all times, we will maintain a high speed, particularly when we conduct a battle pass. We will use our batteries and reserve warp to maintain the capability to perform a high energy turn and to shift the electronic warfare situation in our favor. We will engage at Ranges 5 or 8, depending on our position on the map and our ability to maneuver away after the battle pass. We will use our displacement devices to displace our ships away and then run to reload our heavy weapons. We will try to avoid engaging inside Range 4, as then the possibility increases of the Federation force hitting with many photon torpedoes and overwhelming our power absorber panels. Because the enemy is composed entirely of small ships, and mostly frigates at that, the enemy will not be able to maintain high speed and high electronic warfare, much less high speed, electronic warfare, and recharging weapons. We will use the disparity in power curves to engage the enemy on our terms. This disparity in power curves will also help us manage our batteries for a long hit-and-run battle.

While we cannot use transporters to lay transporter bombs, we can still lay them out our hatches. We will use our transporter bombs to destroy enemy drone waves and use speed to run others out of endurance, even if they are fast drones. We will use our phaser-2s to destroy drones when we need to fly through them in order to conduct a battle pass. Finally, we can still use our scout sensor channels to break the lock-ons of Federation drones, to identify seeking weapons, or to attract a seeking weapon. The result will be Victory!

FEDERATION POINTY END OF THE STICK

by Jeff Wile, USS Minnesota

DD+ USS *Azrael* (100): 2xT-bombs (+8); one extra boarding party (+0.5) = 108.5.

FFGa USS *Meade* (76): 2xT-bombs (+8); Drones: 4xtype-IF (+4); one extra boarding party (+0.5) = 88.5.

FFGa USS *Pope* (76): 2xT-bombs (+8); Drones: 4xtype-IF (+4); one extra boarding party (+0.5) = 88.5.

FFGa USS *MacGruder* (76): 2xT-bombs (+8); Drones: 4xtype-IF (+4); one extra boarding party (+0.5) = 88.5.

FFGa USS *Logan* (76): 2xT-bombs (+8); Drones: 4xtype-IF (+4); one extra boarding party (+0.5) = 88.5.

FFS+ USS *Hillery* (75): 2xT-bombs (+8); Drones: 4xtype-IF (+4); one extra boarding party (+0.5) = 87.5.

Total = 550.

Intelligence claims that only light opposition is likely to be encountered. This battle force is the pointy stick used to probe the darkness. Sometimes, the intelligence analysts are right.

And sometimes they are not.

Captain Dewey Nimitz Johnson of the USS *Azrael* looked around the conference room of "his" flagship. The room was filled to overflowing with his officers. Even though its saucer was similar in size to that of its "stablemate" *Constitution*-class heavy cruisers of Star Fleet, a Federation destroyer was not designed to act as the tactical flagship of a battle squadron. In the briefing room stood the captains and executive officers of each ship in the "pointy stick" squadron, along with each ship's tactical officer, science officer, and Marine contingent commander.

It was time to deliver "the speech," given by the force commander to inspire the troops before going into battle. Every eye in the room was watching him now. Johnson stood up, took a breath, and charged.

"You all know the situation. The enemy has chosen the battlefield, a zone of sunspot activity. All communications will be disrupted. Follow the plan, use your initiative, but remember to follow the plan. The squadron will be in a line ahead formation (a single file of ships), 20,000 kilometers (two hexes) apart. The *Hillery* will lead, followed by the FFGs; the last unit in the line will be *Azrael*. In the event that the Andromedans use their displacement devices to disrupt the formation by transporting one or more ships out of it, make your best possible tactical speed to rejoin the formation. At any point of the battle, any given ship may be in the lead. It is imperative that we pursue the enemy. Even if a given ship has empty photon torpedo launchers it must engage the enemy closely; the ships behind it will have photons, drones, and phasers. I repeat, the lead ship *must* close with the enemy.

"The sunspot activity zone will disrupt our ability to use transporters and tractors; the enemy will be similarly affected. The Andromedan tractor-repulsor beams will function as weapons, but not as tractors. The *Hillery* will engage in overrun attacks and, depending on the use of her special sensors, will either down-fire its phasers-1s as phaser-3s or, if not using a special sensor to self loan ECM points, fire at full strength. Each following ship must fire photons from the minimum safe range (two hexes, 20,000 kilometers) to avoid taking feedback damage. After a ship has expended its photons, it may engage in an overrun attack using its phasers and drones. Once a ship has completed its attack, it will circle back to join the end of the formation, reload its photons, and if needed its drone racks.

"We will repeat this procedure as needed.

"Battle speed initially will be Speed 31, holding overloaded photon torpedoes, using our batteries on the initial turn. If the enemy runs, we will pursue. If the enemy moves toward us, we will hit them with overloaded photon torpedoes at Range 2, and turn away to reload. On subsequent turns the range to the enemy will determine our battle speed. Greater than 25 hexes range

we will move at Speed 31. Between Ranges 15 and 24 the speed plotted will be 21. At less than Range 14 our speed will be 11.

"A comment about electronic warfare. Sunspot activity zones create eight points of natural ECM for each ship. On the turns that we are rearming photon torpedoes our ships will generate additional ECM to protect themselves. On the turns that we are attacking with our photon torpedoes, we will generate ECCM to increase the odds of actually damaging the enemy. At long range we will reduce our electronic warfare energy accordingly; at close range, we will increase ECM. We have eight points of natural electronic counter measures; let us use it to our advantage.

"The object is to hit the Andromedan power absorber panels with more damage than they can handle. With a dozen photon-torpedoes, 21 phaser-1s, 12 phaser-3s, and five type-G-drone racks, we have the weapons to do it! However, it will require that we get close and stay close and just beat the enemy with our "pointy stick" until they run away or are destroyed. We must keep the status of the enemy's power absorber panels in mind at all times. We have a dozen shuttles with 12 more phaser-3s. If we see an opportunity to launch them as phaser platforms we shall do so; 12 more phaser-3s might be enough to kill an enemy ship. We will not employ scatter-packs because we do not have drones to waste. With the electronic warfare situation, the enemy's ability to displace ships (whether theirs or ours), there is too much risk of wasting drones in fruitless attacks. Each ship must use its drones to the best tactical advantage it can.

"Be prepared: If we have destroyed any two of the enemy's ships, and have penetrated the remaining ship's power absorber panels it may be possible to capture the last ship by docking, and sending over the boarding parties. If we make the attempt, remember to use shuttles to transfer more boarding parties. We have 42 boarding parties at start; used effectively, we might bring home a souvenir.

"Good luck and confusion to our enemies!"

MATCH #2: ON THE ROCKS

Terrain: Asteroids (P3.0), set up the asteroid field as per (P3.11), the die rolls for asteroid adjustment are: Section A: 2, 5, 6; Section B: 2, 3, 5; Section C: 1, 3, 4; Section D: 2, 4, 5; Section E: 1, 4, 6; Section F: 3, 4, 6. This is so that tactics will be based on the same asteroid field layout.

ROMULAN PATROL DETACHMENT SQUADRON

by Xander Fulton, *USS Oregon*

It has been a rough couple of years, with the loss of the *Harrower* being particularly hard to take. However, the new sabot refits, faster and more durable shuttles, and the introduction of gunboats to the fleet are making things look a little bit brighter!

SPL+ *Primus* (143): Sabot refit (+4), Mech-link refit (+2); two extra commando squads (+2) = 151.

SPA+ *Venator* (135): Sabot refit (+4); two extra commando squads (+2), two extra heavy weapons squads (+2) = 143.

SPC+ *Pathfinder* (140): Sabot refit (+4); replace 1xA-Admin with sensor drogue (+7); one extra commando squad (+1) = 152.

CEN+ *PF8311-1* (47): Sabot refit (+5) = 52.

CEN+ *PF8311-2* (47): Sabot refit (+5) = 52.

Centurion PFs on *Primus's* mech-links.

Total = 550.

Finding a Federation squadron navigating the asteroid field near our front lines provides us with an opportunity to advance our Empire's cause in this war. We will defeat this enemy by capitalizing on their weaknesses unique to this terrain, specifically that their photon torpedoes are sensitive to unfavorable electronic warfare conditions, and their high-speed drones are tre-

mendously fragile within the asteroid fields. At the speeds their drones will be travelling, entering any asteroid hex will present a 2/3 chance of even their largest drones being destroyed. There is a statistically insignificant chance of *any* of their drones being able to survive entering three asteroid hexes. Of course, our plasma torpedoes will also be affected by this (and at a slightly higher damage rate when launched as sabot torpedoes), so we must be mindful of these asteroids, ourselves. However, our plasma torpedoes will not be as adversely affected as the Federation's drones. Some of the Federation disadvantages in photon torpedo accuracy will be offset by the tremendous output of their powerful scout ship, so we will initially focus on the scout ship as our priority target.

Our forces will begin deployed within 10,000 km (i.e., all in one hex) of tactical grid sector 4128. Our capital ships will gradually accelerate to Warp 2.46 (i.e., Speed 15), which we will often remain at, or return to after accelerating to a higher speed, for the favorable turn mode versus higher speeds. We will move along the lower portion of the engagement zone, advancing towards the Federation squadron and completing the arming of our heavy plasma torpedoes. Our gunboats will detach and move along with the ships, jumping to Warp 3.1 (Speed 30) as soon as they are able and closing further along the same plot towards the enemy. As they reach Warp 3.1 and prepare to leave the capital ships behind, *Primus* should launch its plasma-F pseudo-plasma torpedoes as ECM plasma torpedoes, one providing support for each gunboat.

Our gunboats will then lead our initial attack on the enemy, supported with additional ECM by two of the scout channels from *Pathfinder*, which will be operating at the maximum distance its special sensors allow (adjusting for the range impact of the asteroid clusters). The gunboats will operate under erratic maneuvers with maximum generated ECM and also supported by ECM plasma torpedoes from *Primus*. It is likely that the enemy will have their scout ship positioned in the rear of their formation, to support their combat ships while reducing its own vulnerability. In this position it should be easier for our gunboats to make an attack run on it, navigating rapidly around the asteroid clusters for cover as they leave *Pathfinder* behind. A wide approach around the asteroids will prevent the enemy cruisers from being able to effectively engage them.

Once the enemy scout ship is heavily damaged, we will be able to take advantage of our weapons' superior resistance to the environment. This phase of the engagement will see *Pathfinder's* electronic warfare support focus more on defense for the *Primus* and *Venator* as well as itself. Our phaser suite will primarily focus on seeking-weapon defense, so we will not call for heavy ECCM. Our plasma torpedoes will need little electronic warfare support, owing to their built-in ECCM capabilities.

We will implement a standard enveloping plasma ballet strategy against the enemy with our heavy plasma torpedoes, with occasional phaser strikes to block the enemy working from any approach they try to make. We will hold our plasma-F torpedoes in reserve to deter overruns or to destroy likely scatter-pack shuttles. A critical component of this strategy will be maneuvering to ensure we consistently have asteroid clusters between us and the enemy. This will deteriorate their photon torpedo efficiency and act as a brick wall they cannot get drone launches through. The Federation may attempt to use their own plasma torpedoes from their battlecruiser to create a path through an asteroid field their ships can "follow" (P3.23). As a result, we will want to be watchful of the enemy launching the torpedoes in that fashion, as it can provide a clue to their intent.

If we do find it necessary to cloak and navigate through asteroid hexes, we will need to be cautious with our speed, moving no faster than Warp 1.8 (Speed 6), as having a cloak voided in the presence of this much Federation firepower would go very badly for us. However, this should not be required, as occasional

harassment from a surviving gunboat, combined with a plasma ballet executed from our capital ships, should keep enough pressure on the Federation squadron that we will not need to maneuver so defensively.

WITH THE THIRD BATTLE SQUADRON

by Eddie Crutchfield, USS Michigan

Captain Pratt on the heavy cruiser *Krieger*, somewhere in the Romulan-Tholian-Klingon border region: "The Juggernaut almost did us in! Commodore Jones with the *Essex* had to return to base for major repairs and appears to be gone for awhile; the other ships of the Third Squadron had to return for refit, so Admiral Jackson is back with the *Bismarck*. I have not seen him in five years, and the fast scout cruiser *Eagle* is with him. Last time he was a commodore, and had a war destroyer scout. I guess when you become an admiral you go up in the world.

BCF *Bismarck* (180): Sabot refit (+2); 1xT-bomb (+4); Drones: 3xtype-IVF (+3), 2xtype-IF (+2); 1xdecoy drogue (+9) = 200.

CARa+ *Krieger* (145): 1xT-bomb (+4); Drones: 1xtype-IVF (+1), 1xtype-IF (+1), 1xtype-IECMFX (+1.5) 1xdecoy drogue (+9) = 161.5.

CFS *Eagle* (180): Drones: 1xtype-IECMFX (+1.5), 3xtype-IF (+3), 4xtype-IVF (+4) = 188.5.

Total = 550.

Using the terrain in this engagement is going to be one of the keys. The Romulan has several advantages. On Turn #1 he will have the speed advantage. His ships can move Speed 20 and his gunboats can do Speed 30, so to some extent he will be able to control the initial engagement. This is mainly because it will cost us much more power to arm our photons at weapon status II than it will cost him to arm his plasma torpedoes. The second is the restricted battle space; it will be much more difficult to run out the plasma torpedoes, especially sabots.

Both of us have terrain advantages and disadvantages other than the normal ship handling problems. His primary problem is that his plasma torpedoes can take asteroid damage to their warheads, so I want to make them travel through asteroids as much as possible, but the ECM created by the asteroids will affect the accuracy of our photon torpedoes. We can offset that somewhat with the *Eagle*. That brings us to his scout. It is nice to have heavy weapons, but with a little luck he will have hard choices to make as to whether to use its weapons or use its scout channels.

This brings us to starting positions, which I will use to offset his speed advantage. I intend to move an 18/12 split with the *Krieger* and *Bismarck*; the *Eagle* will move Speed 20 and end slightly in front of the others and have two sensor channels powered. I intend on starting in hexes 0401-3. This will allow me to clear the asteroids by Impulse #6/#7 and give me a clear drone launch lane at gaps 2001 and 2210, depending on his movement, and a clear area to work in. There are three starting areas for the Romulan. Section C hex 3002 area, the border of area sections C & F, and the far corner of section F. If he deploys in the first two areas he could enter the open area with his gunboats by mid-turn, if he chooses the 2001 or 2210 gaps. I can react to either even at the slower speed. The 2001 gap could also be closed with transporter bombs. By launching drones on Impulse #7 I can have them only two hexes away by the time he tries to exit the asteroids. I am assuming he will launch plasma torpedoes during his approach, so dropping to Speed 12 will allow me to keep a reasonable speed and to launch my decoy drogues if needed. The *Eagle* can maintain speed and actually increase it if needed to outrun plasma torpedoes. All ships will also have a wild weasel ready and because of weapons status II we will all be loading a scatter-pack for later use. He will almost

have to wait until he exits the gaps to launch his plasma torpedoes or risk them going through multiple asteroid hexes. If he delays his speed, he gives me time to build up speed and finish overloading the photons. If he begins in the last area, combat on the first turn will not take place and I will move to block his entrance.

From Turn #2 on it becomes a real game of maneuver. I will actually stay very close to the asteroids and may, by using mid-turn speed changes, move in and out as I try to find places to shoot through them with minimal electronic warfare shifts. The idea will be to force his plasma torpedoes into the asteroids as often as possible. Drones and scatter-packs will be used when he comes out into the open to chase me. The *Bismarck* will be doing most of the firing of photons and phasers as it has the power curve to maintain speed and rearm. The *Krieger* will use its weapons when we have a real opportunity to disable a unit or blow up a gunboat. His scout will be a problem, as it will make a great follow-up ship once the primary ships have engaged. *Eagle*, on the other hand, does not have the offensive punch, but will have the power to use its channels more effectively. This is the time for the Galactic Survey Cruiser. In ways it reminds me of the Maze of Asteroids scenario.

MATCH #3: TAKING THE PULSE

Terrain: Variable Pulsar (P5.0). The pulsar is in hex 2215, die rolls for pulses are as follows: Turn #1 3, Turn #2 21, Turn #3 16, Turn #4 29, Turn #5 25, Turn #6 2, Turn #7 13, Turn #8 19, Turn #9 25, Turn #10 15, Turn #11 26, Turn #12 30, Turn #13 5, Turn #14 22, Turn #15 11, Turn #16 4, Turn #17 26, Turn #18 2, Turn #19 32, Turn #20 14.

PERSUASION WITH EXTREME PREJUDICE

by John Christie, HMAS Queensland

D7L *Direslayer* (141): Y175 refit (+3); Drones: 1xtype-IECMF (+1), 1xtype-IIIIECMF (+1.5), 4xtype-IVF (+4), 1xtype-IF (+1), 1xtype-IAF (0.5 space armor, 0.5 space explosive) (+1), 4xtype-VIF replacing ADDs (+3); convert two boarding parties to commando squads (+1); note; mech-link refit included = 156.5,

2xG1+ (86): Each 4xtype-IVF (+8) = 94 on *Direslayer* mech-links.

D5W *Soulwing* (150): Drones: 1xtype-IECMF (+1), 1xtype-IIIIECMF (+1.5), 4xtype-IVF (+4), 1xtype-IF (+1), 1xtype-IAF (0.5 space armor, 0.5 space explosive) (+1), 4xtype-VIF replacing ADDs (+3); one extra boarding party (+0.5), convert two boarding parties to commando squads (+1) = 163.

D5S *Research* (120): Y175 refit (+2); Drones: 1xtype-IECMF (+1), 1xtype-IIIIECMF (+1.5), 4xtype-IVF (+4), 1xtype-IF (+1), 1xtype-IAF (0.5 space armor, 0.5 space explosive) (+1), 4xtype-VIF replacing ADDs (+3); two extra commando squads (+2), two extra boarding parties (+1) = 136.5.

Total = 550.

"Ten 'Hut!' The officers around the conference table in the IKV *Direslayer's* conference room snapped upright.

Kommodore Kurgan stalked in. "Be seated!" The assembled sentients were looking somewhat pale: so much for security. At least the G1 skippers had some idea of what they were facing, as they were the survivors of a local squadron. The *Soulwing* was new construction, the *Research* was from the Kzinti front, and the *Direslayer* was fresh out of a major rebuild after a bad time against the Federation.

"Warriors! We are in deep keelvosh! We have been ordered to patrol the Vudar border, close to variable pulsar X489-76-AB. The Vudar also have a squadron patrolling this area, including a heavy cruiser, war cruisers, war destroyer, and war destroyer scout. Another force is to shortly launch an operation in this area,

and we have been ordered to 'remove' the Vudar squadron."

All present were now very pale and sweating.

"Apart from our G1 comrades, has anyone else any experience against the Vudar?" Every head shook negatively. "Has anyone ever fought near a pulsar, variable or otherwise? My only 'experience' was in the academy; the simulator program crashed before we could begin and they could not get a replacement." There was more shaking of heads.

"At least the scientists have been able to provide a rough idea of the timing of the pulsar's bursts. This information is in your data pads. Study it, as we will need to use it to time our attacks."

The Kommodore paused. "First things first. We will be within 20 hexes of the pulsar, so we will be taking 5-30 points of damage every pulse. This means our drone launches — and scatter-packs as well — will have to be carefully timed. Also, we will need to time our approaches inside 10 hexes to the longer gaps between pulses. Those 32+ impulse gaps are when we have to approach to use drones and scatter-packs, including ECM drones. This is also when the G1s can be launched to attack, but they must be sure to re-link with *Direslayer* before the next pulse emits."

"The *Research* will need to hold back and provide maximum electronic warfare support to the rest of the squadron. There is no dishonor in that. Use any surplus power to reinforce the shield that will be facing the pulsar when it pulses. Maneuver to spread the damage over several shields. Only power two scout channels at a time, and bring the others up as soon as possible after each pulse.

"All ships will have a scatter-pack loaded. While I would prefer to include an ECM drone, I do not think we will have enough to do it under these conditions. We will initiate attacks immediately after each pulse. Use speed changes to maximize power and keep outside 10 hexes. As the Vudar will probably be launching attacks at these times as well, make sure you have overloads ready. All surplus power will be used to reinforce our ships' shields, and make sure you are coming in behind drone swarms. Priority targets are the war destroyer and war destroyer scout first, but if you have a chance to hit the war cruiser or heavy cruiser with a serious alpha-strike, then take it.

"Dismissed!"

Kommodore Kurgan headed to his quarters to get a large bottle of "liberated" Andorian whiskey.

VUDAR BATTLE GROUP VANGUARD

by Joe Carlson, *USS Oregon*

CA *Vanguard* (+145): 2xT-bombs (+8); replace one A-admin shuttle with A-MRS (+8); two extra commando squads (+2), one extra heavy weapons squad (+1), one extra combat engineer squad (+1), 10 extra boarding parties (+5) = 170.

CW *Maelstrom* (+125): 2xT-bombs (+8); replace one A-admin shuttle with one A-GAS (+2); two extra commando squads (+2), one extra heavy weapons squad (+1), 10 extra boarding parties (+5); eight transporter artillery rounds (+2) = 145.

DW *Fire Storm* (+100): 1xT-bomb (+4); 10 extra boarding parties (+5) = 109.

DWS *Stormguider* (+110): 1xT-bomb (+4); replace one A-admin shuttle with one decoy drogue (+9); 2 extra boarding parties (+1) = 124.

Total = 548.

The squadron has 11 ion cannons, 18 phaser-1s, six ion pulse generators, eight phaser-2s, eight phaser-3s, and six T-bombs. Five of the ion cannons have an FX firing arc while all the phaser-2s have an RA firing arc. Ion cannons require two turns to arm and require one point of ion energy (E21.31). This range of weapons gives the Vudar the tactical advantage to conduct saber-style attacks or overrun attacks or defend against either

style of attack. Much of the Klingon combat potential is contained in their drones and G1 gunboats, which are severally impacted by the variable pulsar. The damage caused by the pulsar bursts is a tactical disadvantage for the Klingons.

Vanguard and *Stormguider* will start in hex 3910 heading F. *Maelstrom* and *Fire Storm* will start in hex 3810 heading F. On Turn #1 they will change their headings to the direction the Klingons enter the map board. We will stay 11 or more hexes away from the pulsar (in hex 2215) so that the damage it causes is no higher than 50% (P5.22). Also we will not let the Klingons maneuver so that we are between them and the pulsar. We will keep our ships in formation to avoid total destruction.

Turn #6 is the mostly likely turn for the Klingons to create a drone wave and follow it in for an overrun attack. We will have suicide shuttles, overloaded ion cannons, three or more ion pulse generators, and two scout channels available. At any given time one special sensor on the *Stormguider* will be blinded for every 12 points of damage caused by the pulsar (P5.23).

Guards are to be assigned to the FX-arc ion cannons, ion pulse generators, auxiliary power reactors, and bridge of each ship; the *Stormguider* will assign guards to its special sensors. All ships will allocate specific reinforcement each turn to the shield facing the pulsar (P5.23). The Klingon squadron will have a tactical advantage when it comes to speed because their disruptors are not as power hungry; we will limit this advantage by planning for mid-turn speed changes.

Our primary target will be the D7L every turn; we will at least try to destroy its three forward shields. The D7L's four disruptors all have an FA firing arc and without those shields it will be difficult for it to mount an attack without sustaining heavy damage. Once the D7L is crippled or destroyed, then we will target the D5W. The Klingon gunboats are targets of opportunity; they are fragile but can cause a lot of damage. We will not let them get closer than Range 9 because at Range 8 these units can fire overloaded disruptors with a 1-4 hit rate and cause six points of damage. This only gets worse at closer ranges. The *Vanguard* is likely to be the Klingon's primary target.

MATCH #4: A BIT NEBULOUS

Terrain: Nebulae (P6.0), the Notxes Nebula is a quiet one [see the last sentence of (P6.5)].

ROMULAN UPDATED HAWK SQUADRON

by Nick Blank, *USS Ohio*

SUP-K *Praetor Tacitus* (197): Sabot refit (+8); Fighters: 4xTribune-F *Tacitus's Talons* (+80); Warp booster packs (+4); Fighter pod stockpile: 8xEW, 4xphaser, 7xcargo, 1xsensor = 289.

GHA *Gryphon* (143): Sabot refit (+4); 2xT-bombs (+8) = 155.

JH *Immovable* (95): Sabot refit (+3); 2xT-bombs (+8) = 106.

Total = 550.

Well, this is another fine mess that High Command has gotten us into. The pirates have been tracked to this nebula and, as they could exit from any direction to hit multiple vulnerable convoy routes, we have no choice but to go in after them.

Our fighters and cloaking devices will be useless, so we will not arm the fighters as they will only be a chain reaction threat, but in turn the enemy will not be able to use wild weasels. We are outnumbered, but their vessels are small and vulnerable with only minimal shields. Our plasma torpedoes, while degraded by the nebula, are still effective out to 15-18 hexes for the plasma-S launchers and out to 5-6 hexes for the plasma-F launchers. However we only have three heavy launchers. Our heavy plasma-S launchers along with our phasers will be used for attacks on the enemy ships. The plasma-F launchers are to be kept back for critical overrun deterrent.

The enemy is armed with photon torpedoes and phasers. He has nearly as many offensive phasers as our ships (15 to 16), but all are in 360° mounts, so fewer of ours will bear on the enemy at any one time. In the heavy ECM nebula environment, the pirates can be expected to devote maximum power (six points) to ECCM in an attempt to get photon torpedo hits, while we will counter with six points of ECM. This will maintain a net ECM level of nine points and a guaranteed die roll shift of three. This will make their photon torpedoes drastically less effective, even at point-blank range. In this environment standard or overloaded photon torpedoes will not be able to hit at all outside of Range 4. At Range 3-4 only one out of six will hit; at Range 2 we can expect one out of three to hit, and about half to hit at Range 0-1. With such terrible odds we can expect the enemy's photon torpedoes to be overloaded to compensate, so we must maintain a range greater than two, preferably greater than four. This will force the Orions to resort to the photon torpedo's less effective proximity fuse mode, which still means only one out of six will hit at ranges of 9-12. If the Orions are able to close to Range 2, we can expect to suffer great damage up to and including the loss of ships. With minimum shields only, any photon torpedo hits can be devastating. This can be catastrophic at Range 0-1, although in that case feedback damage will do unpleasant things to the pirates as well.

So we will plan on moving at or near top speed at all times in an effort to keep the range open. Our phasers and plasma-S torpedoes will be used in attacks on ships. Plasma-F torpedoes will be used if the Orions charge and threaten an overrun. We will use our pseudo-plasma torpedoes as appropriate to supplement our attacks, as they are useless as electronic warfare plasma torpedoes in the nebula.

Our plasma torpedo attacks must be concentrated enough to draw Orion phaser fire away from our ships, while our phasers are used against the Orions. With only three plasma-S torpedoes this will be difficult and will at times require waiting for the Orions to get close before launching them so that our plasma-F torpedoes are also effective and can be added to the strike. There is a fine line between allowing the Orions close enough to deal enough plasma torpedo and phaser damage to them while keeping them out of their own effective photon torpedo range. Against Orions with their ability to double their engines, this is even more difficult. Maintaining a high speed along with maximum ECM levels will be critical. Shield reinforcement is tempting, but keeping out of photon range will be much more effective than five more shield boxes.

Good luck, flagship out.

ORION DRAGON CARTEL FORCE

by Alex Lyons, USS Missouri

5xDBR (500): Each: Weapon Options A-E: photon torpedoes (+0); 2xT-bombs (+40); four extra boarding parties (+10) = 550. Total = 550.

Men, we are entering a nebula. This means that our shields are limited and we will have a hard time hitting with our photon torpedoes. However, this means that the Romulan's fighters are useless, their ships cannot cloak, and they will have the same targeting and shield problems that we have. Our stealth-coated hulls are our one great advantage.

Using our stealth we will never have less than 11 ECM, which means at best our opponent has an electronic warfare shift of two against him. Bolting plasma-F torpedoes is their only chance of hurting us with them; however their three plasma-S torpedoes can go out 12-15 impulses and still hurt us badly. Our best move is to stick together and all target on the same unit.

We will fire our first salvo of photon torpedoes at Range 12. Ten proximity-fused photon torpedoes with six ECCM will make

our *worst* case a shift of three against us. If we have better odds than that, we will add in all our phaser-1s. Our primary target is the SuperHawk-K. That may change if another ship is separated from the group. After our initial salvo of photon torpedoes, we must use our batteries to power four ECM making it that much harder for our opponent to see us. If his plasma torpedoes cannot hit us, he cannot win.

Each turn we will fire 10 proximity-fused photon torpedoes leaving 15 available for the next turn should they be needed. If our opponent manages to get to Range 8 at any point in time, we must show them that the Dragon Cartel is not to be trifled with. We will double every engine on the ships, overload all 15 remaining photon torpedoes, and send the Romulans into the abyss.

Our tactic is to stay as close to Range 12 as possible, leaving the Romulans in a battle they cannot win. Plasma-S torpedoes will be used against us, but luckily the nebula will damage them along their journey making it easier on our phaser banks to dissipate them. Shuttles are useless, so do not even bother arming a weasel; phaser-3s should take care of the torpedoes.

Our photon torpedoes fire every other turn. The Romulans cannot hope to match our firing rate, but plasma torpedoes can be just as deadly as our photons especially in a minimal shield environment, so keep track of their plasma-S torpedoes; quick-fired plasma-F torpedoes are not out of the question.

We cannot allow the Romulans to win this sector; even if we all must die to defend it, we shall never surrender. Let's just hope the Romulans do not share our intensity. Make them flee or kill them all, the Dragon Cartel will prevail!

MATCH #5: INTO THE FIRE

Terrain: Heat Zone (P10.0). There is no white dwarf (P10.5).

KZINTI RESERVE BATTLEGROUP

by Steve Cain, USS Missouri

CD+ (128): Refits: Y175 (+6), mech-link (+2); 3xT-bombs (+12); Drones: 6xtype-IF (+6), 6xtype-IVF (+6), 4xtype-IVF .5 Armor (+4), 3xtype-IECMHXF (+6), 2xtype-IF Probe (+1), 4xtype-IMWF (+18), 2xtype-IF Swordfish (+3); convert two boarding parties to heavy weapons squads (+1), two extra combat engineer squads (+2), 10 extra boarding parties (+5) = 200.

2xDW (168): Each: Y175 refit (+12); 1xT-bomb (+8); Drones: 2xtype-IVF (+4), 6xtype-IF (+12), 3xtype-IVF .5 Armor (+6), 2xtype-IECMHXF (+8), 2xtype-IIIMWF(+20), replace two anti-drones with type-VIF (+3); two extra commando squads (+4), 10 extra boarding parties (+5) = 250.

2xPF+ (84): Each: Drones: 8xtype-IF (+16) = 100 PFs on CD+'s mech-links.

Total = 550.

Our preparations will focus on a long battle conducted at a range of no less than 12 hexes and no greater than 21. The Needles will stay at the outer end of this zone. This will provide room for a loose group maneuvering in less powerful ranges of the Lyran disruptors and phasers. While offensive electronic warfare cannot be used outside of Range 15, lending electronic warfare will still be available since the formation will remain within a few hexes of each other. Due to the heat zone's electronic warfare, keep your shields intact. Use reserve power to raise general reinforcement if a shield is breached. Shield repairs and immediate recovery of scatter-pack shuttles by (J1.621) will all be critical to victory. Drones can still be transferred by transporters, but will require general reinforcement to avoid heat damage. The main factor for this terrain is ensuring damage (up to four points per shield, per turn) to Lyran ships and avoiding this on our own ships along with the two points per turn that shuttles receive. Fortunately, our drones are unaffected by heat zones.

The impact of weapons status II limits each ship to one prepared shuttle. This benefits us in that wild weasels and suicide shuttles take both time and energy, while scatter-packs only require time. This is slightly offset by our need to recover and reload the scatter-pack shuttles for the long battle and that Lyran special shuttles are not expected to survive long enough to suffer from heat damage. While this does not impact disruptors, drone racks, and phasers, the Lyran's ESGs will be limited to two points of power in each capacitor. This presents us an opportunity to overwhelm their drone defenses. We will put more drones in flight through use of one special sensor for drone guidance. Transfer and use of the drone cruiser's 300 spare drone spaces through transporter operations to the war destroyers will allow for frequent use of scatter-packs and sustained drone rack launches. If caught at close range, our type-VI dogfight drones will provide an extra surprise to absorb ESGs and potentially add minor damage if the Lyrans have overlooked these in our war destroyers' anti-drone racks.

We will begin near a corner (i.e., around hex 4005 or hex 4028) facing the center of the map. We will plot Speed 8 until Impulse #12, then Speed 17 after recovering our scatter-pack shuttles. We will maneuver to set up an orbit with the Lyran group while playing for long-term center map positioning. We will keep the group somewhat loose with a minimum of one space between each ship and all ships maintaining the same range bracket from the Lyrans. When a shield is breached, that ship will maneuver to the far side of the group and slightly increase its distance from the Lyrans if it will move the ship into a higher range bracket. We will focus our attack on the better-presented target of the CAL and war cruiser. While a unique design, the CAL can be thought of as being very close to a Lyran battlecruiser. Since, the Lyran group consolidates its firepower into two ships, while our drone cruiser is a weak scout with six drone racks, we will use this advantage to quickly halve their firepower while they must batter additional shields on our ships. Above all, remember that we have time to fight. The 300 drones in storage on our drone cruiser is over 16 turns of launching a scatter-packs from each ship, so we can launch 24 turns of drone waves before we run low on expendables. We will use this time to deplete the Lyran's ESG capacitors, batteries, and wear them down knowing that we are not slaves to their power needs.

LYRAN FAST RESPONSE TEAM

by Stewart W. Frazier, USS Ohio

CAL (153): UIM (+5); 2xT-bombs (+8); two extra commando squads (+2) = 168.

CWP+B (128): UIM (+5), mech-link refit (+2); 2xT-bombs (+8); two extra commando squads (+2) = 145.

2xBobcat+ (84) = 84 on CWP+B's mech-links.

CWS+B (144): = 2xT-bombs (+8); convert two boarding parties to commando squads (+1) = 153.

Total = 550.

The Lyran command suspects something nearby and has sent us as a heavier-than-normal scouting force to find out what is hiding there.

We now find a drone cruiser with two escorting war destroyers and two gunboats in heat zone YZ-90076-X. The heat may limit their scatter-pack usage, as unattended shuttles will be destroyed within 128 impulses by the heat. Also, the rules of engagement favor the Kzintis a bit by boxing us into an limited engagement area, meaning we will be engaging inside of knife fighting ranges at several points in the future. The Kzinti force has 18 drone racks and can launch up to 22 (four type-C racks on the war destroyers), but can control only 30 (36 if the drone cruiser dedicates a scout channel).

We will start by moving at only Speed 15 to charge-up our

ESGs for later use and to keep the range open and take advantage of our disruptor range (30 versus 22). His having gunboats may help us here. Instead of screaming in (Speed-24+), he may be a bit more sedate in speed. We will keep our own gunboat helpers close, and our speed on the next turn will be whatever the situation demands.

We will start with the CAL in hex 4001, the CW in hex 4103, and the CWS in hex 4201, all heading C. We will keep the Bobcats on their mech-links until we get the lay of the land. If the Kzintis start in xx01-xx18 with a high speed (24+), we turn in direction D, if at a slower speed, we sideslip in direction D; if the Kzintis start in xx19-xx30, we sideslip in direction B trying to keep the range as open as possible. We will release the Bobcats after Impulse #3 (our first move), and they will begin erratic maneuvers by Impulse #7, as it is unlikely they will have a target on the first turn. The objective is to maneuver so that we keep the Kzintis in our FX arc so that one 60° turn places them in our forward arc, facing seven disruptors, 11 phaser-1s, and five phaser-2s. Warship disruptors will hold normal loads while the Bobcats' disruptors are overloaded (just in case). The scout will generate six ECM while our remaining ships generate four ECM and two ECCM. In addition, the scout will have all five of its channels powered adding one ECCM to the CAL and CW. Our ESGs will be brought to combat levels (five points of power) for warships with the scout holding four points of power. All batteries are to be charged with warp energy for a possible speed increase late in the turn.

On Impulse #24 (or #25 depending on range) we will fire seven disruptors targeting the lead war destroyer. If overload ranges have been reached, then one disruptor of the CAL/CW will be overloaded and phaser-1s will be added (plus the Bobcats will exit erratic maneuver) with a plus-one shift being acceptable. (Hopefully this means we also have a plus-one shift on the Kzintis.) If the range is close enough that the Bobcats might enter overload range (on the lead enemy element), they will hold their fire until they reach that range. The Serval captain should attract the ECM drone from the leading war destroyer with his fourth channel while using the fifth channel to break the lock-ons of Kzinti drones. If the Kzintis are outside of Range 15 on Impulse #24, then it will use its two remaining channels for lock-on breaking on Impulse #29 or #30. I suspect that the Kzinti drones will start about this time so that they will have up to 30 at the start of the second turn (probably all targeted on just one of our ships) just to overwhelm our defenses. All phaser-2s (six on our ships, four on our Bobcats) and all phaser-3s are to be dedicated to anti-drone defense (unless there are no drones between us and the Kzintis' launch ability is minimal).

Hit-and-run raids, although unlikely during the first turn, will see the Marines of our war cruiser target a drone rack and scanner tracks later in the fight. The CAL's Marines will be targeting the sensor track (special sensor on the drone cruiser) and weapons (disruptors, phaser-1s). The scout's Marines will not be used unless there is an opportunity to strike scanner tracks and drone racks. Dropping shields will cause internal damage to our ships due to the zone effects (minimum shield down time is a quarter turn, which matches the damage cycle of the heat zone).

The second turn will depend on the range at the end of the first turn. If we are outside Range 15, cruisers will load normal disruptors and use a 19/29 speed plot (increasing speed on Impulse #16, Bobcats at 20/30). Electronic warfare will remain at four ECM and two ECCM for the warships, six ECM for the scout, and three ECM and two ECCM for the Bobcats (which will continue erratic maneuvers). The scout is to have all five channels up for breaking lock-ons, but may attract one or two Kzinti ECM drones. The Bobcats are to have overloaded disruptors in case the Needles decide to rush in. Our objective is a Range-15 battle pass, targeting the Kzinti lead element. T-bombs are to be dropped if the main drone wave can reach us before our speed change (depending on how lucky our scout is).

If the range is between 11 and 15 hexes, we will use a speed plot of 29/19 (Bobcats at 30/20), reversed electronic warfare (two ECM and four ECCM on our CAL, CW), normal disruptors, and the Bobcats with overloads for the Kzinti Needles. The scout will operate as we would at longer range. Our objective is to fire disruptors on Impulse #1 on the leading Kzinti element and turn away. T-bombs are to be used to insure some spacing before the decrease in speed. One ship will use its ESG(s) at radius three if the remaining drones are clustered enough.

If the range is between 9 and 10 hexes, the Bobcats will use normal disruptors but otherwise as Range 11-15.

If the range is 8 hexes or less, then we have handed the Kzintis a gift. We will arm full overloads, use Speed Zero initially [increasing to Speed 10 (possibly in reverse, depending on the Kzintis' speed) on Impulse #14], radius Zero ESGs forming on the warships (so our scout has a chance to break more drone lock-ons), and tractors and transporters will be powered. The scout can use radius three ESGs (or radius two if positioned right) to aid the cruisers in their defense. Phaser-1s will be added to the disruptor volley. The Bobcats will be at Speed 30 with overloaded disruptors and moving to one side of the Kzinti formation, while using their phasers in anti-drone mode. One Bobcat will fire its disruptors with the CAL, the other with the CW. The scout will aid our cruisers with an extra ECM and two or three points of ECCM and may even aid itself with an ECM point. The remaining channels are for breaking drone lock-ons or attracting ECM drones (if not done already) so that the scout may raise its ESGs in defense. The CW will fire on the lead Kzinti element while the CAL will fire on the second lead. If the CAL's target is a Needle, hold fire for the on-side phasers (L or R arc) and the 360° phasers for a follow-up or opportunity fire.

From the third turn onwards, we will depend more on generalities, as it is doubtful that the enemy will follow what one wishes. The following priorities are good guidelines: power to damage control on a down shield (or a shield with less than six boxes strength, priority to the shield facing the enemy), FX disruptors (channels on the scout), phasers, speed, tractors, FA disruptors/ESGs (depending on the situation). Damage repair (D9.7) priority is to be tractors, phasers (with phaser-1s repaired as phaser-2s), disruptors (Range 10), and phaser-3s.

If/when the Bobcats get separated, keep their speed at 25+. If the Needles do come to play with them, Bobcats can usually handle them one-on-one (a phaser-2+3 shot [at Range 1] can kill a type-IV drone, even if it has a half space of armor [66.67%]). Plus the Needles will run out of drones at some point [although they may stay out just to assist in drone control (30 control channels with the Needles versus 18 without them)].

MATCH #6: DUST TO DUST

Terrain: Intense Dust Clouds (P13.5).

THOLIAN TASK FORCE NIGHTFALL

by Alan Trevor, USS Virginia

CWL *Osmium* (134): Mech-link refit (+2); 3xT-bombs (+12); eight extra boarding parties (+4), two extra commando squads (+2) = 154.

NCL *Valiant* (136): 3xT-bombs (+12); four extra boarding parties (+2), two extra commando squads (+2) = 152.

CHP *Onyx* (135): 3xT-bombs (+12); Replace one shuttle with sensor drogue (+7); four extra boarding parties (+2), two extra commando squads (+2) = 158.

2xArachnid+ (86) = 86 on *Osmium's* mech-links.

Total = 550.

We are facing a Jindarian force that has more heavy weapons and more phaser-1s than our force and would be quite a

challenge in open space. Fortunately, we are fighting in an intense dust cloud, which interferes with their heavy weapons far more than it does ours. We should be able to win this fight.

The first key is to control the range. Our preferred engagement range is 6-8 hexes. Their light rail guns are almost useless beyond Range 5 and their medium rail guns, while still capable of doing some damage, are markedly inferior to our overloaded disruptors and photon torpedoes. Our weapons will lose some accuracy due to the ECM effects of the dust cloud but they are not degraded nearly as much as theirs are. The Jindarians will have to attempt to close to Range 5 or less. Both their medium rail guns and light rail guns have a 1-5 hexes range bracket and do not improve again until they reach Range Zero. Our disruptors and photon torpedoes do improve when they reach Range 4, and again at Range 2, and again at Range 1. Their weapons arm and hold for very little energy (giving them plenty of speed) and the battle space is limited, so we will not be able to keep them outside Range 5 indefinitely. We want to ensure that when they reach Range 5, we will be able to get to within Range 4.

Note that the *Osmium*, *Onyx*, and our gunboats should be in the front, with the *Valiant* hanging back. The *Valiant* has our best weaponry, but the weakest shields of our cruisers and will be a natural target for the Jindarians. By hanging back at 15 hexes (as long as this is possible) while the other cruisers and the gunboats close to overload range, the *Valiant* can still contribute some firepower, while preserving its web caster for later turns.

We will use our T-bombs and our web caster to control the range. We will maneuver so our war cruisers and gunboats move into Range 8 of the Jindarians on their #2 or #6 shield, and with our turn modes satisfied, near the end of the turn. The *Onyx* should have its drogue deployed and providing full ECCM. We will fire an alpha strike against one Jindarian ship. (We might want to risk splitting our fire against two ships if we are shooting with no ECM shift, but since the Jindarians cannot hurt us much at this range anyway, they will probably be running with heavy ECM. Coupled with the effects of the dust cloud, a "no-ECM-shift" shot is unlikely.)

After firing, we will turn away so that the Jindarians do not reach Range 5 this turn or the following turn (while our photon torpedoes are reloading). The *Onyx* should also retrieve its drogue if it has survived. The *Valiant* will place a web to interfere with the Jindarians' movement and the *Osmium* and *Onyx* can also drop T-bombs. If the Jindarians move at high speed they may achieve Range 5 during our photon-reload turn, but at that speed they will also take shield damage from the dust cloud.

Depending on the exact positioning, *Osmium* and the gunboats can snipe at the pursuers with their phasers and half of their disruptors. The decision on whether to use standard or overloaded disruptors will depend on the specific position of the ships. If we think the difference in power will enable us to generate enough speed to remain outside Range 5 (counting on the assistance of the *Valiant's* webs and any placed T-bombs) we will arm standard disruptors.

If it appears our enemy will achieve Range 5 anyway, we will overload our disruptors. When the *Onyx* has finished rearming its photon torpedoes, it will turn back towards the enemy. The *Onyx* will redeploy its sensor drogue early enough that it will have full ECCM available for its second pass. (If the enemy fires early in the rearming turn, we will consider turning back towards them during that turn.) Depending on the speeds at which we were fleeing and the Jindarians were pursuing, we might be able to place a web so that they will have no clear line-of-fire during the second pass until we reach Range 4 (or less).

Note that the above instructions assume our ships dropped T-bombs during the withdrawal after the first pass, to hinder pursuit. However, as the old adage states, no plan can be counted on to survive past the first contact with the enemy. The enemy may do something unexpected (for example, charging at very

high speed and accept the dust damage to the shields) and we may not be able to execute the two-pass attack described above. In that case, we want the first pass to be at Range 4 or less, but we do not want the Jindarians to reach Range Zero. We will consider casting web so they will have no clear line-of-fire until they are already at Range 4. While the web is screening us, we will drop a shield (*be aware of the impulses on which we will take damage from dust*) and use our transporters to place T-bombs ahead of us. We will then turn new shields to face them (or depending on range and closing speed, bring the dropped shields back up) before they have line-of-fire.

We must use mid-turn speed changes to minimize damage from dust. Our gunboats are especially good at this as they can accelerate by +15, or triple their current speed, and are nimble so they can change speed more quickly. If we make our initial attack an oblique one, taking their first volley on our #2 or #6 shields as discussed above, any damage to our #1 shields as a result of moving through the dust will not result in additional internal damage. The excellent flank shielding of the Tholian *Osmium* and *Onyx* also work to our advantage here. Since every ship in our force has a safe high energy turn, we can make the first pass off our #2 shields and then use a high energy turn to make our second pass off our #6 shields without exposing our dust-cloud-damaged #1 shields on either of our first two passes. We must give careful consideration about when the *Onyx* will deploy its drogue while determining what speeds we will use and when/whether we will use a high energy turn. None of the previous is to be taken to mean that we should run around at high speed needlessly. We will only do so if it will put us in a tactically advantageous position. We will not let fear of the dust cloud prevent us from achieving a good firing position.

We have lots of boarding parties and some commando squads. Since we do not have many transporters, a capture attempt will be difficult, but we can certainly conduct hit-and-run raids. (Fortunately, the Jindarian force is all metal-hulled ships, as asteroid ships are vastly harder to raid.) In open space, the rail guns would be obvious targets for these raids, but in the dust cloud their phaser-1s are probably better targets. If we attack power systems, we will go after their batteries or APRs in preference to their engines, which are more likely to be guarded. We will not forget to guard our own systems, *especially* the web caster! Fortunately we have enough boarding parties to both conduct hit-and-run raids and guard the critical systems on our ships. Finally, we must consider our choice of hit-and-run raid targets. Their war destroyers have the most boarding parties. They will have few unguarded systems of any value, but their destroyer and frigate will have far fewer guarded systems and, other things being equal, are more promising targets for our hit-and-run raids.

We do not know why the Jindarians decided to fight in this dust cloud. No doubt other elements of our fleet are exploring that aspect of the situation. Our job is to either drive the Jindarians out or destroy them in place. Good hunting.

JINDARIAN NO ROCKS BUT LOTS OF ROLL

by John Wyszynski, USS Maryland

HCS *Jily* (180): 4xCargo (+0), 4xFabrication (+0) = 180.
 DW *Jony* (100) = 100.
 DW *Jucy* (100) = 100.
 DD *Jai* (90): 4xCargo (+0), 4xFabrication (+0) = 90.
 FF *Jayden* (80): 2xCargo (+0), 2xLab (+0) = 80.
 Total = 550.

First officer: "Captain, weapon control confirms that the rail guns are ineffective in this dust cloud."

Captain: "We are in a poor position against that incoming force. Signal the task force to save their energy and shut down their rail guns. Keep the phasers hot and keep together. Kick up

the speed a bit. We'll take a wide pass to see exactly what we're dealing with."

First officer: "Task force acknowledging orders. Tactical officers confirm that we are outgunned."

Captain: "Okay, let's take a look and then get out of here."

MATCH #7: STORM WAVES

Terrain: Ion Storm (P14.0): Gravity waves prescribed by (P14.2) enter the map from direction #5 and move in Direction #2. For purposes of (P14.3), die rolls are considered to be (by turn): 1, 4, 5, 2, 6, 2, 1, 3, 5, 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 4, 2, 6, 3, 5, 5, 2.

HYDRAN STRIKE FORCE SEVENTEEN

by Richard Eitzen, USS Florida

OV *Hoshjwaw'ulis* (180): 2xT-bombs (+8); Fighters: 4xStinger-2M (+60), 2xStinger-HM (+30); Fighter pod stockpile: 12xelectronic warfare, 11xcargo, 6xchaff, and 1xsensor; two extra boarding parties (+1) = 279.

TAR *Trident* (125): 2xT-bombs (+8) = 133.

HNG *Seventh Battle of Hydraxaport* (38): 2xT-bombs (+8) = 46.

2xHellion+ (92) = 92 on *Hoshjwaw'ulis's* mech-links.
 Total = 550.

We will be starting in the bottom left corner of the map. The Hellions will be launched, but not our fighters; fighters will be loaded with two electronic warfare pods each. Seeking to use the gravity wave against the opponent, we will start the turn at slow speed long enough to allow the gravity wave to strike on our rear shields, afterwards launching our fighters and increasing speed to follow the wave. When the gravity wave strikes the enemy ships it will force them to turn away from us, giving us a superior tactical position to close in and get a good shot. Transporter bombs will be used to create a minefield against ESGs, as will our hellbores if needed. Our ships will lead the attack to better allow our fighters and Hellions to survive to reach close range.

If we can get our small units in close, then we should be able to win. The *Hydraxaport* should be held back slightly and seek a shot at a down enemy shield (as well as opportunities to board or to make hit-and-run raids against enemy units). If the opportunity arises, the *Hoshjwaw'ulis*, being larger than any LDR unit, should tractor as many of their ships or Bobcats as it can, as they will be unable to fire on any other Hydran unit. This will allow the *Hydraxaport* or our Hellions to close to point-blank range on any tractor unit more easily. We must be particularly alert for opportunities to do this on rearm turns instead of arming all hellbores.

We must be certain to get our fighters onto a ship to avoid gravity waves. They can land on any Hydran ship to do this, or even crashland on board an enemy ship if that is the only way to avoid the wave.

LDR REVOLUTION'S PRIDE SQUADRON

by A. David Merritt, USS Missouri

CWLBm (153): 4xT-bombs (+16); MRS (+8); warp booster pack for MRS (+1); 10 extra boarding parties (+5), two extra commando squads (+2), two extra combat engineer squads (+2), convert two boarding parties to heavy weapons squads (+1); 8xtransporter artillery rounds (+2) = 190.

2xDW+B (220): Each: UIM refit (+10); 2xT-bombs (+16); 10 extra boarding parties (+10), two extra commando squads (+4); two extra combat engineer squads (+4); convert two boarding parties to heavy weapons squads (+2); 6xtransporter artillery rounds (+3) = 269.

2xBobcat-A+ (84) = 84 on CWLBm's mech-links.
 Total = 543.

Difficulties of the Ion Storm

Radiation Zone: Once a shield is down, we lose a crew unit on Impulses #4, #12, #20, and #28. The Overlord has more crew than our war cruiser leader does, so we must manage our shields wisely and always be repairing a shield box on any shield in danger of being dropped; however our shields nearly match in size. Both of our war destroyers have the same level of crew as the Hydran's Tartar, and bigger shields as well, but we will still have to exercise shield discipline. His Commando Hunter has the least crew of any unit susceptible to radiation crew loss, and the weakest shields to boot. The only thing we can really do here is to concentrate the damage on our crew units and, after we drop to eight crew-units, start marking off boarding parties (remember two boarding parties to one crew unit). We will preserve our commando squads, and if using (D16.0) Advanced Boarding Party Combat, the combat engineer squads.

Gravity Waves: Ten points of damage to two shields every turn is going to be a problem when combined with the radiation effects above. Note that one gravity wave will destroy our MRS, and his Stingers, if they are launched. We must save the MRS for something critical. We can not expect to see the Stingers out when the gravity waves go by the Hydrans. We must time the use of our gunboats carefully. While immune to the radiation effects, a gravity wave will destroy two shield facings at a time, or wreck a gunboat with down shields. I intend to maneuver in such a way as to take advantage of the gravity waves' tendency to turn our ships; a two-hex side turn in one impulse can help us hook around the Hydrans.

Range Limit of 25 Hexes: Not much of a concern, while longer-range sniping suffers, a range of 22 hexes is sufficient for our purposes.

Intermittent Effects: Ion storms have unpredictable periods of disruption (P14.3), but for now the periods of disruption are known. The advanced knowledge allows these effects to be used tactically in the planning, but each is discussed below:

Eight Points of ECM: With our primary longer-range weapons being disruptors and phaser-1s, and the Hydran's being hellbores, fusion beams, and a mix of phaser-1s and phaser-2s, we mostly come out ahead here. Note however that the hellbore, being a two-die weapon, is less affected by electronic warfare than our own weapons are and of course will automatically hit active ESGs. At close range, our ESGs do not care about electronic warfare at all. In any event, all ships are to keep two points of ECM up during the periods of eight ECM, that way the enemy will have at least a shift of two on all of his fire.

Lack of communications is little more than a nuisance.

Loss of Transporters and Tractors: This can be a problem. Without tractors, death dragging crippled Stinger-2Ms/HMs is impossible. Without transporters, capturing the enemy's ships becomes much more difficult.

Combat General Order One: Drop two shield boxes on shields #3, #4, and #5 on all units that have the same number of shield boxes on shields #2 through #6. After damage to those shields raise those two points back, if possible.

I do not generally care to keep all of our units in one hex, but given the risks of both hellbores, and the radiation damage, it would be best. When within 10 hexes of the Hydran units we will keep two ESGs up as hellbore sponges. If he fires all of his hellbores in one turn, we will save the power on the following turn, while remembering that he may launch both of his gunboats and Stinger-HMs on such an "off" turn.

Turn #1: We will start in hex 3811 heading towards our opponent. We will plot a speed of 21, arm disruptors at standard levels, use six points ECCM, and place remaining power into our ESG capacitors. If we can reach a range of 15 hexes, or a best range that is less than 22 hexes from the Overlord, we will fire on the Overlord with all bearing weapons, except the phaser-Gs which we will only fire if at Range 15 or less, then turn away. I will

use the MRS now to maximize both offensive and defensive electronic warfare for the CWL, recovering the MRS if practical.

Turn #2: We will avoid closing while rearming our phasers, using a speed of 15 if our opponent will give us this luxury, and put up two points of ECM. We will use any remaining power to reinforce the shields we will take the gravity waves on.

Turn #3: We will close and position ourselves to hit the Hydrans on Turn #4, when the eight ECM penalty is not in effect. All ships will maintain two points of ECM, top off one ESG and make sure the other has five points of power in it. We will use whatever power is left to reinforce the shields the gravity waves will hit.

Turn #4: We will make a close pass with the intent to force the launch of the enemy's Stinger-2M/HM and gunboats. We will time our run to coincide with the gravity wave to hit his smaller units; *we will not* release our gunboats, preserving them until later when most units on the board are mangled. The CWL will follow the DWs in, sacrificing one, if needed, in order to preserve the CWL and the gunboats. If the MRS has managed to survive until this point, we will use it again.

Turns #5 and #6: We will spend most of our time avoiding combat, repairing shields, rearming our phasers and ESGs, and reinforcing the shields facing the gravity waves.

Turns #7 and #8: We will board and attempt to capture the Tartar as long as we still have at least six transporters. We will beam half the boarding parties at combat rates and the other half at standard rates on the first lift, and use standard rates in the second lift. If the Commando Hunter is still intact, we must kill it; otherwise we will work the Overlord over with our remaining weapons. Now will be when we launch the Bobcats.

Turn #9: We will spend most of our time avoiding combat, repairing shields, rearming our phasers and ESGs, and reinforcing the shields facing the gravity waves.

Turns #10 through #13: We will finish off the Overlord. If two lifts were not enough to capture the Tartar, we will very carefully judge if a third lift will work, as we do not want to lose a ship to radiation, and then fail to capture the Tartar. We will then finish off what is left of the Hydrans, and go home.

MATCH #8: IN THE ZONE

Terrain: Radiation Zone (P15.0), no neutron star (P15.5).

HYDRAN 22ND CRUISER SQUADRON: FOX HOUNDS

by Matthew Potter, USS Oregon

IRQ *Arrowhead* (136): Fighters: 2xStinger-2M *9th Iroquois Squadron* (+30); Fighter pod stockpile: 4xEW, 2xground-attack, 3xcargo, and 1xsensor; four warp booster packs for admin shuttles (+4); five extra boarding parties (+2.5) = 172.5.

IRQ *Starguild* (136): Fighters: 2xStinger-2M *3rd Iroquois Squadron* (+30); Fighter pod stockpile: 4xEW, 2xground-attack, 3xcargo, and 1xsensor; four warp booster packs for admin shuttles (+4); five extra boarding parties (+2.5) = 172.5.

MHK *Heartbow* (111): Fighters: 6xStinger-2 *6th Mohawk Squadron* (+60), 2xStinger-HM *10th Mohawk Attack Squadron* (+30); Fighter pod stockpile: 16xEW, 8xground-attack, 15xcargo, and 1xsensor; four warp booster packs for admin shuttles (+4) = 205.

Total = 550.

The results of the first turn can easily determine if this will be an easy or difficult battle. We almost have enough fighters to teach the Inter-Stellar Concordium how to do an echelon, but are short a squadron of fighters. Instead, we will keep everyone in the same hex (a super-stack). The ISC destroyers are fairly inconsequential, since our ship-based phaser-Gs can easily overcome their plasma torpedoes. The ISC destroyer leader's enveloped plasma-G torpedoes are more resistant to phasers and the

plasmatic pulsar devices on the strike cruiser can knock down our shields. That means the destroyer leader and the strike cruiser are our primary targets. If the plasmatic pulsar devices and plasma-G torpedoes are destroyed and our ships still have significant power, the battle is ours.

Initially, we will plot maximum speed (Speed 20) with several points of ECCM for each ship. All ships are to keep a wild weasel charged, in case the enemy decides to dump all of his plasma torpedoes in a few impulses. Our mega-fighters will launch early, so they will be active when we do our battle-pass.

Our battle pass will be on an oblique shield at Range 15. We will strike with our phaser-1s, phaser-2s, and hellbores, so that the phasers create a weak shield on our target (the destroyer leader or the strike cruiser) and the hellbores will collapse it. If we are firing through more than a plus one shift, then fire half the hellbores in direct-fire mode instead of firing the phasers. At this point, we will run out any plasma torpedoes the enemy launched. We will not ever get caught in a corner, even if this means letting the enemy get closer. At Range 10 our fusion beams become surprisingly dangerous and able to knock down shields.

On the reload turn, we will repair any down shields the plasma torpedoes might have created. In this terrain, we have several turns before we start to suffer from crew casualties. The enemy's strike cruiser is similarly well crewed, but his destroyers will become lifeless hulks a few turns earlier. We will keep our speeds up as high as we can so as to run out the short-lived plasma torpedoes. Otherwise, we will punish the enemy with our fusions for closing with us (if they were not fired the previous turn). If our fusion beams are offline, then it is imperative to keep distance between our ships and the enemy.

On the following attack turn, we will do the same thing we did on Turn #1: keep a very high speed, attack on the oblique, and aim to mission-kill the destroyer leader or the strike cruiser. We will most likely wish to target the ship we did not target on Turn #1. The plasmatic pulsar devices have a good chance of simply falling off the strike cruiser over the course of three Mizia shots. The plasma-G torpedoes on the destroyer leader are well insulated by its rear-firing plasma-F torpedo launchers, so the destroyer leader is likely to need a second attack, or one of the previously mentioned Range-10 fusion attacks if he presses us.

The six standard Stinger-2s on the *Heartbow* should only come out if the enemy appears ready to press us close, such as when he looks to trap us in a corner and attempt to anchor one of our ships. If the enemy launches enough plasma torpedoes to warrant the use of a wild weasel (such as launching all the plasma torpedoes he has on his heavy weapons drogue), then we will launch the *Heartbow's* slower fighters and then the group will emergency decelerate and launch wild weasels. The wild weasels should shed the plasma torpedoes and the Stingers should give the enemy pause on the overrun he was hoping to achieve.

ISC 35TH SABOT STRIKE GROUP

by Joshua Driscoll, USS Oregon

CS *Magnetar* (155): Sabot refit (+4); 1xT-bomb (+4); replace 1xA-Admin with heavy plasma drogue with sabot refit (+16); seven extra boarding parties (+3.5), convert two boarding parties to commando squads (+1) = 183.5.

DDL *Enforcer* (110): Sabot refit (+4); 1xT-bomb (+4); replace 1xA-Admin with heavy plasma drogue with sabot refit (+16); three extra boarding parties (+1.5), convert two boarding parties to commando squads (+1) = 136.5.

DD *Time Bandit* (92): Sabot refit (+4); replace 1xA-Admin with heavy plasma drogue with sabot refit (+16); four extra boarding parties (+2), convert two boarding parties to commando squads (+1) = 115. No crab traps will be loaded.

DD *Nova* (92): Sabot refit (+4); replace 1xA-Admin with heavy plasma drogue with sabot refit (+16); four extra boarding parties

(+2), convert two boarding parties to commando squads (+1) = 115.

Total = 550.

There are two major terrain features in this battle. The radiation zone will not have a major effect on the battle as by the time crew losses from radiation exposure become a problem the battle should be over. The feature most likely to have an effect on the outcome of the battle is the fixed map and scenario disengagement rules. The scenario rules state that any ship leaving the map is considered destroyed, so we will try to use the map edge to force the Hydrans into taking damage from our plasma torpedoes. To make the best use of the map edges we must seize the center of the map early. With control of the center of the map the Hydrans will have to fight an uphill battle against our Speed-40 plasma torpedoes. A central map position will also let us spend less energy on movement but keep the enemy in effective range of our weapons.

Neither force has a scout, leaving a generally even playing field for the electronic warfare battle. The ability of the Hydran casual carriers to lend EW support to their Stingers will allow them un-shifted shots on our ships most of the time. We have a slight advantage with our advanced electronic warfare plasma torpedoes, but we have only six of them and one of our destroyers will have to give one up for the *Magnetar*, which has none of its own and must be protected. When these run out we will have to rely on erratic maneuvers to gain an extra boost of ECM.

We will need to be very careful about how many plasma torpedoes we launch in any one turn, as we cannot afford to waste all of our plasma torpedoes on wild weasels. There is not enough room to run and reload with 10 hellbores in the enemy fleet. We are on a very short clock so we need to make the most of the time we have. Our main direct-fire weapons, the plasmatic pulsar devices on the *Magnetar*, may not survive the first pass of hellbores so we must not make the *Magnetar* an easy target.

We will always try to launch our sabot plasma torpedoes two impulses before a double-movement impulse to get the maximum effect from their speed. We will launch our plasma torpedoes so that they will reach the enemy mid-turn. If we launch late in a turn the enemy can plan during the subsequent Energy Allocation Phase exactly how to avoid them. We must look for launching points in the map corners that the Hydrans cannot escape from. If we get Hydrans to use wild weasels in a corner, we may have enough time to get our drogues rearmed and make a second pass.

The heavy plasma drogues are going to be difficult to use, and even more difficult to rearm. (Who knew where we were going when those were ordered?) To win we will need to make the most of them because the drogues cost almost as much as a frigate. We must find a way to use them to good effect, or we are at a significant disadvantage in wasted BPV. We must use the drogues as early as we can. The time spent at Speed 12 or less using the drogues will free up a little more power for electronic warfare when the Hydrans are fully armed. The firepower of 26 plasma-F torpedo sabots and two plasma-G torpedo sabots will make an overrun very painful.

We must time the speed change to Speed 12 and drogue deployment and recovery very carefully. We need to deploy the drogues so that the plasma torpedoes on them are ready to launch when the Hydrans are at both the best range and impulse. At ranges of nine or less the drogues become tempting targets so we are going to want to have recovered them and increased speed before this range.

Target selection is also going to be important. The Mohawk is our target of choice since it carries the most fighters. Cripple the Mohawk and most of the Hydran fighters will have less electronic warfare. On the other hand, if the electronic warfare situation is better for shooting at one of the Iroquois, we should take

the plasmatic pulsar device shots there instead and try to reduce the enemy's hellbore firepower. Whatever gets hit with the plasmatic pulsar devices will be more vulnerable to the *Enforcer's* enveloping plasma-G torpedoes. Eventually the Stingers will need to be dealt with. We have a significant advantage in phaser-1s, so after the Hydran ships have turned away to run out our plasma torpedoes we can close into Range 8 of the fighters and pick off the mega-Stingers with a combination of phasers and plasma torpedo launches.

MATCH #9: UGLY DWARF

Terrain: White Dwarf (P10.5). The white dwarf is located in hex 2215, there are no gravity waves [(P4.29) and (P9.4)].

ANDROMEDAN FORCE *EMPRESA DEL LEVANTE*

by Mike Calhoun, USS Florida

Intruder *Pizarro* (265): 2xT-bombs (+8); convert two boarding parties to commando squads (+1) = 274.

Viper *Almagro* (60): 1xT-bomb (+4) = 64.

Viper *Luque* (60): 1xT-bomb (+4) = 64.

Viper *Ruiz* (60): 1xT-bomb (+4) = 64.

Rattler *Felippio* (80): = 1xT-bomb (+4) = 84.

Total = 550.

Operating in a heat zone, we are definitely on a clock. If a panel absorber panel bank is full, that ship will take a point of internal damage on every Dogfight Resolution Interface. Doing a panel dump will *also* will force us to take internal damage on the Dogfight Resolution Interface, and we cannot dissipate energy from our panels. It will almost certainly be necessary to *do* dumps, and these will need to be carefully planned. With a restricted battle space, our force is in too small of a boxing ring against some very capable enemy ships.

The WYN force is very well armed. Their power curves are also good. Their scout has four phaser-1s, three special sensors, and four batteries, but only 22 points of generated power. The Brigands are just plain dangerous. This battle may end violently and badly for us, as we are outgunned, matching 12 210° disruptors and 36 phaser-1s against three heavy tractor-repulsor beams (LS, FH, RS), three light tractor-repulsor beams (FH), 24 phaser-2s, and three displacement devices.

Our battle plan will consist of high-speed battle runs with judicious use of terrain and our stock of T-bombs to blunt the enemy's drone strikes, and offensive displacements by the *Felippio* and *Pizarro* to disrupt enemy firepower concentrations. The Vipers will have to lead the *Pizarro* by two hexes, both to take advantage of their superior turn mode and to draw fire away from the *Pizarro*. The *Felippio* and *Pizarro* will attempt to displace the enemy units when they are at Range 6 from the Vipers, forcing the enemy to make that "tough" decision to fire or not to fire. If the point of engagement is close enough to the dwarf star we might even get a cheap kill. The *Felippio* will displace one WYN cruiser towards our force, the *Pizarro* will displace one WYN cruiser away from our force.

With a successful offensive displacement made by the *Felippio*, the targeted ship cannot fire on anything *but* the *Felippio*. This may let the Vipers get an unanswered close-range shot which will wreck a WYN war cruiser. Veering off on the rearm turn or even for two turns will be critical as the enemy force has a lot of firepower. The problem with this is the fixed map, so using the white dwarf may be our only choice.

It is likely that the enemy will use six points of offensive electronic warfare against the *Pizarro* on every pass. Ideally the enemy's scout should be mission-killed first. Assuming a lack of enemy cooperation in regard to this (i.e., they keep their scout close but behind their combat forces), it will probably have to

wait for a later pass.

This battle will be ugly, and we will almost certainly lose the Vipers. A wrecked Viper could veer into the dwarf star to create a pulsar burst to eliminate a massive drone wave. Hit-and-run raids may help reduce the enemy's firepower, but in the end this is an ugly fencing match against a big fast man with a big sword.

WYN "RED DEATH" BATTLE GROUP

by Wayne D. Power, HMAS Queensland, Australia

CW *Red Sword* (120): Options: E-F phaser-1 (+0), drones: 1xtype-IIIECMF (+1.5), 3xtype-IF (+3), 1xtype-IVFA (0.5 space armor, 1.5 space explosive) (+1), 3xtype-IVF (+3) = 128.5.

CW *Red Fire* (120): Options: E-F phaser-1 (+0), drones: 1xtype-IIIECMF (+1.5), 3xtype-IF (+3), 1xtype-IVFA (0.5 space armor, 1.5 space explosive) (+1), 3xtype-IVF (+3) = 128.5.

CW *Red Beast* (120): Options: E-F phaser-1 (+0), drones: 1xtype-IIIECMF (+1.5), 3xtype-IF (+3), 1xtype-IVFA (0.5 space armor, 1.5 space explosive) (+1), 3xtype-IVF (+3) = 128.5.

SC *Red Guard* (110): Options: A-B ADD-12 (+2), drones: 1xtype-IIIECMF (+1.5), 3xtype-IF (+3), 1xtype-IVFA (0.5 space armor, 1.5 space explosive) (+1), 3xtype-IVF (+3) = 120.5.

Brigand *Red#4* (22): Options: A-B phaser-1 (+0) = 22.

Brigand *Red#6* (22): Options: A-B phaser-1 (+0) = 22.

The Brigands are on the *Red Guard's* mech-links.

Total = 550.

We have found the Andromedan force, designated *Empresa Del Levante*, in a sector fixed around white dwarf TX1138-95-XB. Our orders are to destroy this Andromedan force.

We will be operating in a heat zone created by the white dwarf, which will cause our ships one point of damage every Dogfight Resolution Interface through each shield that is down. The Andromedans will be receiving one point of power every DRI to each bank of their power absorber panels (one point of internal damage if their panels are full). Also, the Andromedans cannot do any external dissipation of energy to clear their power absorber panels during a turn.

We will seek to hit the same bank of power absorber panels constantly on one enemy ship (our priority target being the Intruder). By firing our weapons late, or at the end of a turn (unless an overrun is available, or a Range 4 or closer shot is available on one of the satellite ships), we should be able to make it difficult for the Andromedans to do a panel dump.

Our three war cruisers will each hold back one disruptor and one phaser-1 for the opportunity to fire at lowered power absorber panels during a turn. We will launch our drones in staggered waves and from converging directions.

Our task force will operate at a range of 7-to-10 hexes from the white dwarf. We will alternate from a medium speed of 14-16 during turns when Andromedan tractor-repulsor beams and displacement devices are armed, to a fast speed of 20-26 when their weapons are cycling or if we are given rear power absorber panels to target and pursue. (Usually this will be when the Andromedans have turned or displaced away after an attack run.)

We will attempt to use the black hole effects of the white dwarf to benefit our ships with extra ECM defense and for extra movement by our drones when launched at Andromedan ships approaching from the direction of the white dwarf. (Two ECM points are gained if the line of sight to the target passes within 10 hexes of a white dwarf.) All the extra electronic warfare our ships can get to counter the Andromedan's offensive use of their displacement devices will be welcomed.

We can control a total of 30 drones (without the use of a sensor channel). When available, our scatter-packs, loaded with 1xtype-IVFA and 2xtype-IVFs, can be launched ballistically (Speed 6 away from the white dwarf, random target, and set to release at a range of 12 hexes) at different areas around the

white dwarf (launching on the 25th impulse of a turn).

It is good that the heat zone has no effect on our drones. However, our shuttles and interceptors take one point of damage on the 12th and 24th impulses of a turn (shuttles receive this effect automatically, the interceptors as ships).

On the first turn we begin at weapons status II, Speed 10. We will accelerate to Speed 16 on Impulse #10 for the remainder of the turn, moving toward the center of the map, 7-to-10 hexes away from the white dwarf. Our initial formation, with all ships heading in direction F, will be as follows: *Red Sword* in hex 3928, *Red Fire* in hex 4028, *Red Beast* in hex 4129, and *Red Guard* in hex 4239. Interceptors, *Red #4* and *Red #6* will remain on the *Red Guard's* mech-links until we have reached Range 12 to the Andromedans. The interceptors will launch at Speed 15, and have four points of ECCM (built in plus swing points), and two points of ECM (generated); and will adopt erratic maneuvers one impulse after launch. The interceptors will also generate four points of shield reinforcement.

Each war cruiser will start with three points of ECM and three points of ECCM. The *Red Guard* will start with two points of ECM with three of its sensor channels powered and six points of power available for electronic warfare use. (Six points of offensive electronic warfare placed on the Intruder would be ideal.) All ships are to cycle warp power through their batteries, which will give us the ability to do a high energy turn should circumstance require it. Also each war cruiser will have one suicide shuttle prepared and the *Red Guard* will start with one scatter-pack prepared. All ships are to begin arming a wild weasel as this can be helpful as ECM defense if a ship is isolated by the successful employment of a displacement device and attacked by two or more satellite ships. The war cruisers will begin loading a scatter-pack, and arm their disruptors at standard loads (overloads could be used from batteries and later as the battle develops). All ships will launch a type-III ECM drone on Impulse #20 of Turn #1. Guards will be assigned to two of the disruptors on each war cruiser, two of the sensor channels on the *Red Guard*. In addition guards will be assigned to the batteries, both warp engines, the sensor track, and the bridge on all ships.

We have available in our fleet 12 disruptors, 26 phaser-1s (not counting the four on the *Red Guard*), eight drone racks, 14 phaser-3s, 14 advanced admin shuttles, 44 boarding parties, as well as 30 drone control channels (not counting the use of a sensor channel by the *Red Guard*). The Andromedans have three heavy tractor-repulsor beams, three light tractor-repulsor beams, three displacement devices, 24 phaser-2s, six T-bombs, four commando squads, two heavy weapons squads, and 54 boarding parties (the tractor-repulsor beams and displacement devices are two turn arming weapons).

Even with the terrain effects of the white dwarf, I expect to destroy the Andromedan *Empresa Del Levante* force.

MATCH # 10: CLOUDY DAY

Terrain: Qixavalor Cloud (OP1.0); there are no clear pockets (OP1.12).

VULPA INSURGENT FIRST IRREGULAR CORPS

by Gary Carney, HMCS Ontario

VBR *Nightwolf* (98): one upgraded tachyon missile per TArack* (+6); four extra boarding parties (+2), two extra commando squads (+2), two extra heavy weapons squads (+2) = 110.

VBR *Skywolf* (98): one upgraded tachyon missile per TArack* (+6); four extra boarding parties (+2), two extra commando squads (+2), two extra heavy weapons squads (+2) = 110.

VBR *Starwolf* (98): one upgraded tachyon missile per TArack* (+6); four extra boarding parties (+2), two extra commando squads (+2), two extra heavy weapons squads (+2) = 110.

VBR *Sunwolf* (98): one upgraded tachyon missile per TArack* (+6); four extra boarding parties (+2), two extra commando squads (+2), two extra heavy weapons squads (+2) = 110.

VBR *Voidwolf* (98): one upgraded tachyon missile per TArack* (+6); four extra boarding parties (+2), two extra commando squads (+2), two extra heavy weapons squads (+2) = 110.

*All tachyon missile upgrades in this force are propulsion-32 (reduced to 28), armor-12, explosion-16; 1.5+.5+1 = 3 BPV apiece.

Shuttles in this force are not "advanced types" as such shuttles have not been introduced to the Omega Octant.

Total = 550.

While the second wave of the Vulpa insurgency against our former Mæsrion comrades (and the New Alliance's current associates from the Federal Republic of Aurora) is in full swing by Y183, the First Irregular Corps is not intended to be used on the front lines of this renewed conflict. Instead, the corps was tasked with raiding isolated colonies and convoys, and with running key supplies and dispatches between disparate Vulpa holdings as well as to and from our Imperial Bloc allies. We were also to respond to unwanted appearances by rogue elements (such as intruding Andromedan or Souldra vessels) which might otherwise derail our wider war aims. Our ships are usually fissioned off to perform these various tasks alone or in pairs; only in the face of more pressing circumstances has this squadron been deployed as a single unit.

In this case, the circumstances are quite pressing indeed. The Corps has been deployed to the Qixavalor Cloud, a region of space riddled with vast pockets of highly volatile gases and plasma. (While "clear pockets" of open space can be found, none have appeared within sensor range of the Corps' current location.) Warp-based movement through the Cloud incurs a point of shield damage per hex although this can be allocated to a facing of each captain's choice. Further the Cloud's volatile gases impact the operations of direct-fire and seeking weapons. Direct-fire weapons score feedback damage equal to one-fifth of their maximum potential damage, while seeking weapons (such as tachyon missiles) score a point of feedback damage as a result of the reaction to their drive plumes as they exit the launcher. However, these reactions also feed into damage scored on an enemy target, scoring an extra 20% of damage upon impact. (The Cloud would have provided a particular benefit to the use of transporter bombs, which score 15 and 13 damage points at Ranges Zero and 1 respectively; regrettably, the Corps' quartermaster made a conspicuous omission by failing to equip the squadron with any such weapons.)

While navigating the Cloud is a challenge in and of itself, a force of Souldra warships has been detected in close proximity. Dealing with these crystalline warships would be quite a challenge even in open space. In the Cloud, where the Souldra's dark matter torpedoes and fighter-like Shards are able to move unimpeded, the absence of transporter bombs will be keenly felt. Plus, while the additional boarding parties aboard each blockade runner are useless against Souldra ships (which neither board nor can be boarded), their very presence acts as a liability should the Souldra succeed in attaching any of their vampiric Black Shards to our ships. Fortunately, the Souldra ships will have to absorb damage from the Cloud terrain on their own Soul Shields; although their (un-)natural regenerative process helps them shoulder this burden to an extent, the lower overall number of shield boxes each class of Souldra ship has will be a factor when the time comes to exchange blows.

At the beginning of the scenario, each ship in the squadron will pay to upgrade the port and starboard tachyon guns to four-point warheads, while holding the prow tachyon guns at the two-point level they begin at on the first turn while at weapons status II. Each ship will apply eight points of specific reinforcement to its

#1 shield. At Speed 10, assuming one point of movement provided by impulse engine power, this reinforcement will be expended over the course of the turn through Cloud interaction. Two additional points of damage will be allocated to the #4 shield by the end of the turn (and any shield damage accrued through long-range sniping via dark matter pulsar fire spread across the #3, #4, and #5 shield arcs). This will allow the squadron to (slowly) approach the Souldra force with a relative minimum of shield damage.

Since Shards are difficult to destroy (or even disable) directly, we will attempt to concentrate our heavy-weapons fire on dealing with them indirectly by destroying the ship each flight of Shards operates from. The squadron will concentrate its efforts in the first pass on gutting the heavy cruiser. All 15 tachyon guns engaging at Range 15, and careful timing of missile launches over the preceding turn break will get all 10 of the enhanced missiles on the table. (Six will be aimed at the heavy cruiser, four at the destroyer.) The relative weakness of each pulsar shot will force the Souldra to allocate a significant portion of its ships' (and Shards') firepower, should they attempt to down the armored missiles. The force multiplier provided by the Cloud will hopefully allow our squadron to mission-kill the heavy cruiser (and land significant damage on the destroyer) in the first pass. Our on-board wide-angle phaser suites will be kept in reserve, their first priority being to target any Black Shards that get too close to the squadron, before allocating fire to other Shards (or to inbound dark matter torpedoes).

If things have gone well, we will be in a position to open the range from the surviving Souldra ships. We will take time to re-arm our tachyon guns (at lower levels, suitable for the concentration of fire at longer range), and use the next two turns' worth of tachyon missiles to help keep their destroyer and frigates busy. If they have not accomplished that, it may be necessary to use the the last sets of missiles as a cover to disengage behind. In either case, we should not plan on staying engaged for longer than the six turns, consecutive or otherwise, we can launch missiles on.

If worst comes to worst, we can at least win a Pyrrhic victory if we succeed in killing all of the Black Shards. The dark matter damage procedure means that the Souldra will not be able to actually destroy our hulls (short of scoring enough frame hits to do the job). The enemy will gain no benefit from our life energies if the only means of extracting them are removed.

With luck, our ships can escape such a grim fate; no doubt with some pointed lessons to impart to our quartermaster on the importance of sourcing transporter bombs upon our return to In-surgent-controlled space.

SOULDRA STRANGERS IN THE NIGHT

by Michael F. Guntly, USS Missouri

CA (160): Shards: 2xBlack (+8), 2xRed (+16), 2xViolet (+18) = 202.

DD (110): Shards: 2xBlack (+8), 2xViolet (+18) = 136.

FT (95): Shards: 1xBlack (+4), 1xRed (+8) = 107.

FF (80): Shards: 2xBlack (+8), 2xRed (+16) = 104.

Total = 549.

We are now well inside the Qixavalor cloud. Since we are going into battle in this frakking cloud, let's take stock of the situation.

The Vulpa ships we will be engaging are small and have less power than our ships, but they have twice the number of shield boxes available. Their boarding parties are worthless and they have no T-bombs, which helps us immensely. Their tachyon guns and phasers have excellent probability-to-hit numbers, but will help us with the feedback damage provided by the Cloud when they fire. Their tachyon missiles are large, powerful, and

fast and will not take movement damage from the Cloud, but we will only see five per turn until the Vulpa run out of them.

In our favor our ships have more power available than the Vulpa, providing flexibility for additional speed, electronic warfare, and rearming our weapons. While we have fewer shield boxes, our shield regeneration capability (12-18 boxes per ship per turn at no cost) will allow us to lessen that disadvantage. Our biggest advantage is our 23 dark matter torpedoes (19 on our ships and four on the Violet shards) which will do more damage because of the Cloud and will be hard to destroy or to avoid on a fixed map. Our second advantage is our 15 dark matter bombs that will also do additional damage because of the Cloud. While our heavy dark matter pulsars are accurate and do decent damage out to Range 8, in general they would do better down-fired as light dark matter pulsars at opportune times where they would not generate feedback damage. In this way they can fire twice per turn, and would provide excellent defense against the tachyon missiles when added to our regular light dark matter pulsars. I do not expect to use our dimensional phase devices, even though they would provide us half a turn of movement without taking shield damage from the Cloud.

So as we engage the Vulpa, the biggest threat to us would be all their ships quickly closing and ending the turn at short range where they could max load and fire all weapons on the first impulse of the following turn. This would do maximum damage to our shields, preventing shield regeneration until repairs are conducted, and cause significant internal damage.

To counter this threat we will need to seize the center of the map as early on Turn #1 as possible. From that position we will launch dark matter torpedoes in gradually increasing quantities to threaten the enemy with significant damage if they continue to close with us. We will launch all shards to provide additional targets, additional dark matter torpedoes to prevent the enemy from closing on us, and additional dark matter pulsars for tachyon missile defense and as an additional threat to a closing enemy. We can also place some of our dark matter bombs to make the enemy's continued closure more expensive. By the end of the first turn we ought to have either severely damaged the enemy squadron, if they continued to close, or forced them to turn off.

If they close anyway, we can then take them on at point-blank range given the damage they will have taken.

If they turn away, we will follow them while continuing to launch dark matter torpedoes to prevent them from turning around. Eventually we should pin them against a map edge where we can barricade them in with our remaining dark matter bombs to slow or stop a break out. In the meantime we will maintain distance, rearming our dark matter torpedoes, after which we will return to repeat the process until they leave or die.



MATCH # 11 A NEW TRON

Terrain: Neutron Star (P15.5) in hex 2215.

HIVER PHASER FIGHTER STRIKE SQUADRON

by Scott Tenhoff, *USS California*

DN *Queen's Own* (120): Mental Node (+15); 1xT-bomb (+4); Fighters: 4xBarb-A (+48); Fighter pod stockpile: 8xEW, 4xPW-3, 7xcargo, 1xsensor; six extra boarding parties (+3) = 190.

CV *Queen's Flight* (65): 5xBarb-A (+60), 1xBarb-H (+24); Fighter pod stockpile: 12xEW, 6xPW-3, 11xcargo, 5xsensor; two extra boarding parties (+1) = 150.

CV *Queen's Wing* (65): 5xBarb-A (+60), 1xBarb-H (+24); Fighter pod stockpile: 12xEW, 6xPW-3, 11xcargo, 5xsensor; two extra boarding parties (+1) = 150.

SCL *Long Focus* (60) = 60.

Shuttles in this force are not "advanced types" as such shuttles have not been introduced to the Omega Octant.

Total = 550.

Well we have a difficult assignment here, dealing with an invading force from the Lesser Magellanic Cloud. With their two-layer shields, it will be difficult for our fighters to even make a dent in them. So we will have to take them on progressively: the smaller fighters first, then the ships. Our ships, like all Hiver ships, have very weak shields, so we will have to protect them as best as we can by both keeping away from the enemy and using electronic warfare. Once *Long Focus* or the CVs lose a shield, they will quickly lose crew units because of the radiation zone. We will start with all of our fighters deployed so we can engage the Maghadim as quickly as possible.

Our Barb-A fighters will have to be our main anti-fighter force. Wide-angle phaser-1s will still do damage with every shot in the Range 4-7 band, which means we can decimate the Maghadim fighters with little retaliation. To do this, we will have to allocate one point of each Barb's power to charge the wide-angle phaser-1, and the remaining three points of power for speed, so they can still go Speed 22. This will allow them to keep away from counter-fire by the Maghadim ships. This will mean that our ships will have to keep up their speed so they can keep up with the fighters and not let the Maghadim ships overrun them. Each ship will have to configure an electronic warfare fighter (with two EW warfare pods) so it can have as much ECCM for each squadron as possible. A second pod will slow the fighter down by one point of speed, so our fighters will be going Speed 23 instead of 24. The *Queen's Own* can provide ECM to *all* of our fighters because it has a mental node, so until the Maghadim fighters have been taken out, it will support our fighters.

With the Maghadim fighters gone, knocking down the shielding of their ships will fall to the *Queen's Own* and our Barb-H heavy fighters with their Sting torpedoes. These must fire a large enough volley to breach the Magellanic shielding volley reduction factor. Depending on which ship our opponent lets get close to us, we should concentrate on it to take it out of action, to prevent it from contributing to destroying our weak ships.

It will be a hard fight to beat the Maghadim; good luck.

MAGHADIM LIGHT CARRIER GROUP

by Jon Berry, *HMCS Alberta*

CVL *First to Fire* (123): Laser Options: #3, #4 Medium Laser (+0); 4xT-bombs (+16); Ship Mass Drivers: 12xASM, 4xKSM, 2xCPM (+0); Fighters: 16xChigger (+128); Fighter Mass Drivers: 44xASM, 2xDGM, 4xAFM, 8xCPM, 6xKSM (+0); Fighter Mass Driver Storage: 200xASM, 32xKSM, 16xDGM, 16xGBM, 16xAFM, 20xCPM (+0); Fighter pod stockpile: 12xtwin laser, 4xearly laser; four extra deck crews (+2), two extra commando squads (+2),

four extra boarding parties (+2) = 273.

Prime Team (25): purchased as part of the battle force, and not as a Commander's Option and assigned to the CVL = 25.

FFE *Last to the Line* (61): 2xT-bombs (+8); Ship Mass Drivers: 18xASM, 1xAFM, 2xDGM, 2xKSM, 1xCPM (+0); Ready Rack Mass Drivers: 4xASM (+0); Fighter Reload Storage: 40xASM, 10xKSM (+0) = 69.

FFE *Last to the Front* (61): 2xT-bombs (+8); Ship Mass Drivers: 18xASM, 1xAFM, 2xDGM, 2xKSM, 1xCPM (+0); Ready Rack Mass Drivers: 4xASM (+0); Fighter Reload Storage: 40xASM, 10xKSM (+0) = 69.

HDS *Specs* (102): Refits: Plus refit (+6), Y175 refit (+4); Laser Options: #3, #4 Medium Laser (+0); Mass Drivers: 36xASM, 12xDGM, 6xCPM (+0); four extra boarding parties (+2) = 114.

Shuttles in this force are not "advanced types" as such shuttles have not been introduced to the Magellanic Cloud.

Total = 550.

Combat around a neutron star does not provide any insurmountable challenge to our carrier group and most of our attention will be focused on the Hivers themselves. A normal carrier duel is marred by the presence of the Hiver's mental node and its ability to share electronic warfare. This turns this straight-up battle into a puzzle about what we should blow up first. Do we destroy the Hiver dreadnought first due to the presence of the mental node? Or do we destroy their scout with its special sensor that makes the mental node's effects even more pronounced?

In the end, the answer has to be their Barb-A fighters. Why? They benefit from the scout and dreadnought combination the most, and represent a large portion of the Hiver's firepower with their phasers. We must first discard the idea of loading all of our Chiggers with anti-fighter missiles as there are simply not enough to go around and the time spent pulling them out of storage and loading them onto the fighters is time wasted.

The first turn will be used to delay the engagement with the Hivers as we finish loading all our fighters with a mix of anti-ship missiles, kinetic slugs, and whatever anti-fighter missiles are in the *First to Fire's* ready racks.

The second turn is the turn we fight. We will not bother to arm our tachyon beams as they are a waste of power against the Barbs, and we will need all of our available energy for electronic warfare and movement. We will max out our ECCM to counter the electronic warfare of the fighters and the *Specs* will fall back to spare more power for lending electronic warfare to our other ships. We will deploy our Chiggers and our ships will keep pace with them as we close to Range 12 from the Hivers where we can open fire on their fighters. If their fighters have not been launched then we will not take the shot.

We will start with our medium lasers and try to kill or cripple as many Barbs as we can. Every Barb rendered mission-killed is another phaser that cannot be used against a Range-10 salvo of our mass drivers. Even through the enemy's electronic warfare and defensive fire, we should be able to score a few solid hits and cripple or kill a few more fighters.

We will then run away. Staying away from their wide-angle phasers is a paramount goal as our Chiggers activate their overdrive to escape reprisal and our ships accelerate as best they can. Using the neutron star for cover is unlikely but will be considered as an option.

Once the Hiver fighters are out of the way, we need to keep the Hivers on the back step. While it may be tempting to focus on the Hiver carriers as the targets for our next wave of mass driver missiles, the dreadnought is a more immediate target due to its mental node. It is the lynchpin of the Hiver force, and its protection and destruction will make or break them.

Our force has a massive advantage in firepower outside Range 8, and we need to play that to our advantage. We will not power the tachyon beams until we are ready for the final blow

and focus instead on making battle passes at Range 10-to-12 with our mass drivers and medium lasers; the attrition against the Hivers will fall in our favor. We do not need to rush for a victory and do not have to press the Hivers too hard lest we get into a range where they can fight better than we can.

MATCH # 12: THE DARKNESS

Terrain: Black Hole (P4.0). The black hole is located in hex 2215; there are no gravity waves [(P4.29) and (P9.4)].

JINDARIAN NO ROCKS BUT LOTS OF ROLL

by John Wyszynski, *USS Maryland*

HCS *Jily* (180): 4xCargo (+0), 4xFabrication (+0) = 180.
 DW *Jony* (100) = 100.
 DW *Jucy* (100) = 100.
 DD *Jai* (90): 4xCargo (+0), 4xFabrication (+0) = 90.
 FF *Jayden* (80): 2xCargo (+0), 2XLab (+0) = 80.
 Total = 550.

We will keep this tight and fast. We will move as one with the *Jily* in the middle, *Jony* and *Jucy* to *Jily's* left and right, and the *Jai* and *Jayden* in trailing spots. We will maximize our speed and try to get into the blind spots of the enemy's big phasers. We want to bring their speed up to minimize their ability to use their scout. If we can turn this into a high-speed phaser dogfight, they will have limited opportunities to use their big phasers.

We will use the black hole to our advantage by getting into a range of 7-to-10 hexes and orbiting around it to try to get the Borak to turn towards it. If we succeed, the Borak will be fighting the black hole's gravity while trying to get into firing position. As we can fire in any direction, we do not have to work as hard to get into firing position.

We will use our rail guns if opportunities present themselves. Our best chance will be to maintain a range of 5-to-10 hexes from the Borak; the punch of their big phasers is greatly reduced, while our medium rail guns can still do some good damage. If they launch their fighters, our medium rail guns can eliminate that threat in quick order.

BORAK RECONNAISSANCE IN FORCE SQUADRON

by George Duffy, *USS New York*

BC *Liberator* (170): 2xT-bombs (+8), 2xHunter-Killer-Ds (+20); Fighter pod stockpile: 4xcargo, 3xphaser, 4xelectronic warfare (+0); 10 extra boarding parties (+5) = 203.

DDL *Guardian* (102): 1xT-bomb (+4), 2xHunter-Killer-Ds (+20); Fighter pod stockpile: 4xcargo, 3xphaser, 4xelectronic warfare (+0); two extra boarding parties (+1) = 127.

DD *Stalworth* (88): 1xT-bomb (+4), 2xHunter-Killer-Ds (+20); Fighter pod stockpile: 4xcargo, 3xphaser, 4xelectronic warfare (+0); two extra boarding parties (+1) = 113.

DDS *Seeker* (102): 1xT-bomb (+4), two extra boarding parties (+1) = 107.
 Total = 540.

In this environment we have several advantages over the Jindarians that will be easy to exploit with proper planning.

First among these is the black hole itself. We start off on opposite sides of the battlefield with the black hole between us. Using the black hole and the 20,000 kilometers (two hexes) to either side of it as a shield, we can close to within 100,000 kilometers (ten hexes) of it before having to decide which way to turn. As we approach, with a plotted speed of 24, and using reserve warp so as to match the speed of the Jindarians, we will keep our ships in a tight formation, close enough so that all will occupy the same hex.

Optimally we will want each side trying to circle the black hole in order to try and get on the others' rear shields. Again we will maintain a high speed of at least 24 and continue to skirt the 100,000 kilometers (10 hex) range from the black hole. At 100,000 kilometers out, any opportunity the Jindarians have of firing on us will have to deal with the +2 ECM effect given off by the black hole on top of our own generated electronic warfare and that of our scout. The purpose of this maneuver is to force the Jindarians to either spend most of their speed to close on us from behind, or use a high energy turn to turn back into us to try to cut the distance by flying closer to the black hole and forcing either an oblique firing pass or an overrun. Should they manage to come up on us from behind, the turrets on the *Liberator* and *Guardian* can whittle down a ship's shield at a greater distance while maintaining a high speed.

By forcing the Jindarians to use a high energy turn we can dictate all of their remaining attacks as flyby strikes. If one strike is done late in a turn we can then follow up that strike with our own high energy turn and then remain behind the Jindarians.

The Jindarians have equal all-around shields and can bring all of their phasers to bear in any arc. Their rail guns however are evenly placed around their ships and have very little overlapping fields of fire. Even with a centerline strike, we will have a superior amount of firepower to take down their ships even though they start with a numerical advantage.

On the approach we can beam out our dummy T-bombs from non-facing shields to keep the Jindarians on our inside arcs, while dropping our real T-bombs from our shuttlebays in order to drift into their flight paths after our firing pass.

The two biggest threats the Jindarians have are the heavy strike cruiser, for its medium rail guns, and their war destroyers, for the added troops they carry. A concentrated strike on either of these targets will eliminate the Jindarians' greatest threat capability. For us the greatest threat to them is *Liberator* or *Seeker*. If *Seeker* lends ECM to the *Liberator* and offensive electronic warfare to the Jindarians' heavy strike cruiser, it will force the Jindarians to deal with *Seeker* first, thereby preserving *Liberator* during the initial exchange.

As an added attack, we launch some of our hunter-killers early (*Guardian* and *Stalworth* only), each carrying two electronic warfare pods, and have them tractor next to our ships to match our speed. With the pods set to ECM they will also benefit from the ECM given off by the black hole.

The Jindarians will have to spend a lot of phasers to eliminate our hunter-killers at a distance. When our approach is much closer, we can release the hunter-killers, have them adopt erratic maneuvering for added protection from Jindarian weapons fire, and close in for suicide attacks on one of the Jindarians' damaged ships. Once released from our tractors, we must remember to keep the hunter-killers at least 100,000 kilometers from the black hole until they are ready to make their attack run on the enemy. The goal is to have one of the enemy's smaller ships forced to tractor one of the hunter-killers in order for *Liberator* to close in and tractor it and drag it away from its group and towards the black hole. By tractoring the hunter-killer the Jindarian ship will have either deployed its available tractor energy and/or its reserve power and will not have enough energy to fight off the *Liberator's* tractor. If no opportunity is provided, then the *Liberator* can tractor the most heavily damaged Jindarian ship.

The greatest advantage we have is our all-phaser armament and speed, both will last longer in this kind of battle than our opponent's weapons. Heavily damage (+50%) the Jindarians' power systems, drag their ships close to the black hole, and the battle will be won quickly.

SEND IN THE CLONES

A Mallaran Empire Primer

by Senior Lieutenant Gary Carney, Ontario

The planet of Mallara (RN102.0) in the Triangulum Galaxy was once home to a peaceful people. Then the mysterious Great Plague hit in -Y22, rendering the entire population sterile. Desperate for a solution, the Mallarans launched Project Overmind in -Y15, creating a highly advanced artificial intelligence tasked with finding a cure to this malaise. While Overmind failed to do so, it instead developed a cloning process which would allow the species to survive, as well as a psychic subspace transmitter which, when implanted in the brain of every citizen, allowed it to determine whose genetic (and mental) legacies would survive and whose would be lost to history. Thus Overmind swiftly assumed total control over Mallaran society.

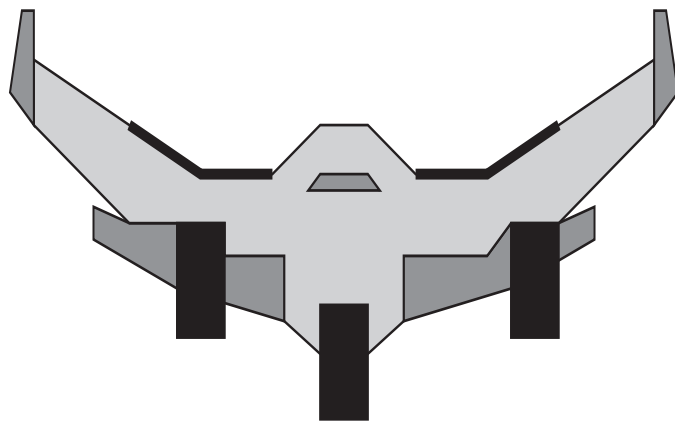
However, there was a catch to this effort. The cloning process took a toll on the genetic material used after only a handful of replications. Fortunately for Overmind (and tragically for everyone else in the galaxy), the Warp Pact signed with the Helgardian Protectorate (RN100.0) in Y1 offered a solution. In order to keep the Mallaran species alive, new genetic samples would have to be taken from other intelligent species, often by force. While the Helgardians might have hoped to welcome Mallara as a peaceful and productive member of the galactic community, they instead unleashed a new form of terror to stalk the stars of M33.

In order to pursue the goal of ransacking the gene pools of their galactic neighbors, the warships of the Mallaran Empire incorporate warp technologies derived from Helgardian samples, certain systems shared with several other Triangulum navies, and others developed through their own efforts.

The first wave of Mallaran warships entered service with the same warp drive limitations as the Imperium and Arachnids. Only after Y120 were they able to catch up to the modern warp technology hitherto enjoyed by the Helgardians. This had less of an impact against Imperial or Arachnid opponents in this era, but made Helgardian ships a tricky prospect (as the Empire found to its cost in Y42).

The Mallarans use the proton pulse emitter (EN100.0) as their main phaser-equivalent weapon. This was a system shared with several other empires in the western quadrant of the Triangulum Galaxy. There are six types of proton pulse emitters, with four types of mounts in which they can be found. (For example, a mount carrying two type-D proton pulse emitters is listed as a P2D.) The Mallarans tend to rely on the type-B proton pulse emitter for close-range defense and on the type-D proton pulse emitter for anti-ship work. If two or more type-B proton pulse emitters are in the same mount, the first shot costs 0.75 energy points to fire while subsequent shots (in the same volley) cost only 0.25 points of power instead. (For the type-D proton pulse emitter, the first shot has an energy cost of 1.5 with one point of power needed for each subsequent shot in the same volley.) While this affords a certain degree of flexibility for each multiple mount, it comes at a price: proton pulse emitters cannot be down-fired as a lesser type, and a multiple mount will still be destroyed on a single damage point.

The earliest heavy weapon developed by the Mallarans was the plasmatron (EN108.0), which packs a powerful (yet short-ranged) direct-fire punch. It is a two-turn arming weapon, with a 1+2 arming cycle. It can be held for two points of power from any source. After Y120, a plasmatron can be overloaded by applying six points of energy in the second turn of arming, rather than two. This doubles the listed damage, but cannot be held. (If not fired at the end of the arming turn, it must be discharged.) Plasmatron damage is rolled like a phaser or fusion beam and is very effective at Ranges 0-3, but drops off considerably beyond Range 4



both in power and accuracy.

After Y44, the primary heavy weapon of the Mallaran fleet is the seeking ram torpedo (FSN100.0). Rams have drone-like ammunition racks: each rack comes with four warheads (and three sets of reloads) as standard. Each warhead must be armed over two turns on a 1+1 arming cycle and cannot be held (but can use rolling delay). Unusually, ram torpedo movement is defined by how many hexes it moves on a given impulse, accelerating from one to three hexes per impulse on the fourth impulse after launch, before gradually slowing down until it runs out after the 10th impulse. Also, the damage a ram torpedo scores is directly multiplied from the per-impulse speed it travels at once it strikes the target. (This multiplier is five prior to Y120, and six thereafter: thus an undamaged ram torpedo launched from a ship with the Y120 refit hitting its target on the fifth impulse after launch scores 18 damage points.) This makes the 6-11 range bracket the preferred launch window for this weapon. However, every second damage point scored on the warhead reduces the multiplier by one; this makes the torpedo more vulnerable the slower it runs. Also, a key point to remember is that unlike most other seeking weapons, ram torpedoes can only move forward or side-slip; they cannot turn or perform high energy turns. (This makes them far more useful against slow-moving ships or fixed installations than in open space.) Further, ram torpedoes are not self-guiding; they require the use of a seeking weapon control channel.

For point-defense work, Mallaran ships also come with the multi-purpose defense system (EN104.0), a weapon akin to the anti-drone (E5.0) or short-range cannon (OE20.0) in the Milky Way. Each multi-purpose defense system comes with six rounds and three sets of reloads; activation costs 0.25 points of power per launcher, and each shot costs 0.1 points of power. As with a short-range cannon, a multi-purpose defense system can score minimum damage against targets of size classes 1-5, but also like the short-range cannon is best saved for use against size class 6 or 7 units instead. Notably, multi-purpose defense system shots will damage plasma torpedoes, but cannot be used to sweep mines.

As with the Hydrans, the Mallarans operate a casual carrier doctrine, using their Viper fighters to augment the firepower of their larger warships. They have two variants of the original Viper-1 in service prior to Y120. One is armed with a plasmatron (limited to Range 10) and a P1B, the other swapping the plasmatron for two small ram torpedoes [a weaker version of the ram torpedo modified for fighter use (FSN101.0)]. The post-Y120 Viper-2 is faster, has a superior dogfight rating, and incorporates a pair of small ram torpedoes and a plasmatron shot. To keep their fighters alive when not firing in anger, each Viper may carry a blur device (JN100.0) pod (mounted on a rail, or in place of a single small ram torpedo); when active (for a maximum period of eight consecutive impulses), the fighter cannot be targeted by

seeking weapons, and generates 18 points of natural ECM.

Mallaran ships use energy absorbers (HN100.0) instead of standard batteries. These can each store a maximum of four points of power, but can only hold one point indefinitely. If carrying any more, one of the added points leaks (harmlessly) at the end of each turn.

Among the four current playtest Triangulum empires, the Mallarans have the highest numbers of boarding parties per unit class. However, they cannot use the battle armor (DN100.0) or powered battle armor (DN101.0) upgrades and they are vulnerable to the threat of Arachnid assimilation. When faced with these threats, the Mallarans make quantity a quality all of its own.

Mallarans use the same sensor and scanner rules (DN101.0) as other Triangulum empires and the same neutronium (DN102.0) armor as most of their non-Helgardian rivals: see the Imperium (RN103.0) primer in *Captain's Log #42* for more on these systems.

At the far side of the turbulent Khartax Free Zone lies the Arachnid Worlds of Union (RN101.0), by far the greatest long-term rival of the Mallaran Empire. Arachnid ships are slightly less maneuverable than their Mallaran counterparts, but make up for this with their plasma-like hellfire (FPN100.0) torpedoes (which, unlike rams, can turn normally and use high energy turns) and arrays of pulse phasers (EN102.0). The Mallarans use proton pulse emitters and multi-purpose defense systems to wither down incoming hellfires, and bombard the arachnids with medium-range ram torpedoes before closing with short-range plasmatron fire. Be wary of assimilation attempts (DN103.0), however.

To the "north" of the Empire lies the Imperium, a collection of older species claiming to inherit the mantle of a lost super-realm (or a nice selection of would-be genetic samples, from the Overmind's point of view). Imperial ships have better turn modes but less powerful direct-fire weapon options. If their maneuvering makes landing ram torpedo hits difficult, get into close range and use your plasmatrons to make the enemy feel all too uncomfortable.

The Helgardians to the far "south" are a different sort of challenge. Prior to Y120, their better warp engines and faster turn modes made it much easier for them to run rings around the Mallarans; fortunately for the Mallaran Empire, the warp drive upgrade levels the playing field considerably. The Helgardians' ability to overload their graviton beams (EN101.0) and particle shotguns (EN106.0) can make close-range exchanges hurt, but their weaker standard shields and porous rotary shielding (GN100.0) allows you to hit them harder. Be wary of leaving Vipers exposed within Range 2 of a free graviton beam.

Ram torpedoes can be tricky to use against any would-be invaders from the Andromedan Galaxy (R10.0), not least if they displace out of the warhead's tracking arc. Fortunately, any satellite bases they use will not be going anywhere, although temporal elevators (G31.0) might require a more close-range launch. At least your ability to land quite a punch in a knife fight can help deter the Andromedans from getting too close for comfort.

In keeping with their over-riding need for fresh samples of "imported" genetic material, the Mallarans are best suited for use against fixed or slow-moving targets (such as colonies on alien planets, or the bases or transports orbiting them). They are still capable enough in open space, but are perhaps less tailored to that environment. As a Mallaran captain or squadron commander, take every opportunity to press the initiative in a campaign; strike at your enemy's worlds, ransack his convoys, and bring the fresh spoils back home. The long-term survival of your people depends on it.

NOTE: These tactics are based on the Triangulum playtest data published in *SFB Module E2* and *Captain's Log #23*; changes may be made to the ships and rules involved at some later time based on playtesting, and on tactics papers like this one.

TERM PAPERS

ANDROMEDAN PLANETARY INVASION BLITZ

— Captain Scott Tenhoff, *USS California*

While the Andromedans can beam satellite ships directly to planets [rule (G19.416) explicitly says so], they can also be beamed directly into the atmosphere/low orbit over a planet and immediately begin low-atmospheric flight [rules (P2.4112) and (P2.80)] by going Speed 1.

Doing this will allow any satellite ships to fire at any ground base which is on the hexside where they are flying (possibly after any such ground base fired on the mothership at Range 5). While tractor-repulsor beams add five hexes to their range under (P2.544) and maulers to lose 25% of their damage, phasers only add one to their die roll. This allows a Cobra/Viper with four phaser-2s to deal 20-24 points of damage on average with its phasers alone. This is enough to damage a ground base, but probably not enough to destroy it. It is enough, however, to drop a shield and allow a hit-and-run raid against any heavy weapon.

A Terminator/Asp can use its mauler and definitely destroy a ground base (every time it can fire while power is available) because they can choose the damage output of the mauler.

Deploying to flying/low-orbit allows any satellite ship to be protected from ground bases on hexsides adjacent to your target, and also gains the atmosphere effects for any enemy ship firing at it. When all of the ground bases are destroyed on your target hexside you can then fly to the adjacent hexsides and start over or be picked up by your mothership to be repaired.

ANDROMEDAN QUICK GROUND ASSAULT

— Captain Terry O'Carroll, *HMAS New South Wales*

Andromedan commando ships, the Diamondback and Rattler, can land on planets to unload boarding parties quickly. This is necessary for the Andromedans who have relatively few transporters and no shuttles. However, conventional landings are time-consuming and can leave the commando ship vulnerable to fire from the defenders. The Diamondback and Rattler are both satellite ships, so they can be carried in a mothership's hangar like any other satellite ship. This means a mothership can carry a commando ship to within five hexes of the planetary surface and then transport the commando ship straight down to the ground using rule (G19.416). The troopship will be protected by the mothership's power absorber panels on the approach, and the defenders will never get a chance to fire directly at the commando ship before it reaches the surface.

ANDROMEDAN RADIATORS

— Commander Michael Grafton, *USS South Carolina*

When your satellite ships take a lot of power into their panels, it is fairly standard to transport them back aboard for a period of cooling off.

Another option is to transport them into a convenient planetary atmosphere for a while. This has a couple of advantages.

1. The power absorber panels dissipate energy at double the normal rate.

2. Your satellite ship can repair its power absorber panels at the maximum rate (of degradation or damage).

THERE IS A TIME TO NARROW SALVO

— Senior Lieutenant Robert Gamble, *USS Massachusetts*

Many players discount or forget the option to narrow salvo.

If a certain amount of damage is needed from a volley, without which the benefit is minimal or none, then weapons should be fired in narrow salvo groups that match the needed damage. Examples include: destroying a fighter about to land, taking out a probable scatter-pack that will release on the following impulse, destroying a wild weasel before it exits the hex of the launching

ship, or taking down a shield of an enemy ship so Marines can be sent over.

In the above cases, there is a very specific goal that requires a certain threshold of damage points, and anything else is a waste of time. Take the scatter-pack example: it requires six points of damage to destroy a shuttle (eight points if it is an advanced type). Let's assume the firing ship is at Range 9 with two standard disruptors and two overloaded disruptors and no other weapons to fire. If it fires the two standard disruptors separately, it has a 44.4% chance to hit with both. If it fires them in a narrow salvo, it has a 66.7% chance to hit with both. Together the two standard disruptors will do the six points of damage necessary to destroy the shuttle, so in this case, the right move would be to use a narrow salvo. While there are situations which would be more complicated to resolve, the key to deciding to use a narrow salvo is to know how much damage is needed to achieve the goal and whether the goal is "all or nothing."

CPA-3s: TWO IS THE NEW THREE

— Senior Lieutenant Gary Carney, *HMCS Ontario*

The charged particle accelerator-3 which the Baduvai Imperium mounted on its first wave of modern-era warships provided the heavy cruiser, destroyer, and battle frigate with a very powerful direct-fire punch, coupled with a useful degree of flexibility. Given the rolling delay charged particle accelerators operate under, these ships have effectively the same arming level when starting at Weapon Status II or Weapon Status III, allowing them to inflict a solid first punch on their opponents.

However, once that blow is landed, planning for the follow-up strikes becomes a more pressing issue. While in principle one could spend three turns worth of warp power building up each ship's charged particle accelerator-3s for the next exchange of heavy weapons fire, it may be counter-productive to wait such a length of time before wading in once more. (This is less of an issue against a slower opponent, such as some of the Middle Years Eeneen ships. However, it can be a dangerous gamble against a Maghadim captain willing to close and take advantage of the fire/fire/cool arming cycles of his tachyon beams over an inconvenient turn break.)

Rather, it may work out more evenly to essentially ignore the third arming level in ship-to-ship encounters (after the first strike has been made) and plan on treating the charged particle accelerator-3 as a de facto charged particle accelerator-2 instead. While this would be of no relief to the Baduvai ships' power budgets, since the same three points of warp power are required per accelerator per turn either way, it can allow the Baduvai player to retain more of the initiative in terms of scoring consistent damage on his opponent. Plus, this allows the Baduvai player to essentially use each charged particle accelerator-3's third chamber as padding for the others. For the battle frigate, it also has the advantage of not running the risk of shock effects which the overgunned battle frigate suffers when attempting to fire its own charged particle accelerator-3 at the highest arming level.

While a Baduvai player could attempt to go even further and press the attack every turn using the lowest arming level, he should only consider doing so if he is confident about his ability to line up favorable firing opportunities each turn. This is more important if he is not fighting an opponent protected by the volley reduction factor of Lesser Magellanic Cloud outer shielding.

The volley reduction factor's benefits against weaker volleys makes two shots by charged particle accelerator-1s overall less effective than one charged particle accelerator-2 shot. While three charged particle accelerator-2 shots over six turns may seem less resistant to the volley reduction factor than two charged particle accelerator-3 shots over the same period of time, the amount of damage the second arming level inflicts is still high enough to give opposing Lesser Magellanic Cloud captains cause for concern.

The third arming level should be used consistently only when lining up attacks against slow-moving or immobile targets, and in situations where the Baduvai player can take his time to conduct a more protracted siege.

This may explain why the next wave of Baduvai starships made such prominent use of the more streamlined charged particle accelerator-2 for open-space combat. Rather than a heavy cruiser hitting once with two charged particle accelerator-3s, then reducing its firepower to two charged particle accelerator-2s every second turn, a war cruiser can plan for three charged particle accelerator-2 shots for each of its own direct-fire exchanges. This only works if the war cruiser has the warp reactor refit needed to keep its battle speed consistent with the bulk of the Baduvai fleet. Yet, the widespread adoption of the charged particle accelerator-2s still left room in the Baduvai Navy for the retention of the charged particle accelerator-3-equipped warships, particularly for dealing with enemy fixed installations.

It may have a strong first punch; but in many cases, once first blood has been drawn, two is the new three for the charged particle accelerator-3.

REVERSE SPEED TRICKS

— Cadet Michael Kenyon, *USS Colorado*

A long-held tactic is to use mid-turn speed changes to gain a speed one hex greater than the break in your Turn Mode by selecting the top end of the break, selecting a speed one lower for the middle part of the turn, and then the maximum again at the end of the turn. By selecting the impulses of transition, you can gain one more hex of movement than the chosen break while maintaining the lower Turn Mode. For example, in a Turn Mode C ship, which has a Turn Mode of four at Speeds 15-20, you can get 21 hexes of movement by plotting:

Speed 20 until Impulse #8,
Speed 19 until Impulse #17,
Speed 20 thereafter.

Interestingly, you can do the same, in reverse, to maintain a higher speed than desired (for future acceleration purposes). For example, it may be tactically useful to move four hexes, but you want to maintain acceleration options for the next turn. With the following plot:

Speed 5 until Impulse #6 (zero movement),
Speed 6 until Impulse #14 (move one hex),
Speed 5 thereafter (move three hexes).

Thereby moving four hexes, but you can still accelerate to Speed 15 next turn under (C12.33). There are very limited speeds where you can perform this trick, but at low speeds it provides flexibility both now and later.

SCOUTS WITH TEETH

— Lieutenant JG William Wilson, *USS Colorado*

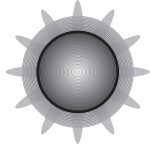
Drogues can provide considerable self-defense or even offensive capability to what is often the weakest ship in the fleet - the scout. Because they do not blind sensor channels, heavy weapons drogues are the ideal firepower supplement to scouts, especially plasma-armed scouts. Instead of having to protect your scout from flanking enemy ships, a scout can use drogue-mounted plasma-F torpedoes for self-defense. The flanking ship may suddenly find itself on the defensive.

The scout's plasma-F torpedoes can also be used to finish off a damaged enemy ship that is not worth detaching a ship from the line for, or just as a surprise to throw off your opponent's planning.

Drone-armed and phaser-armed drogues can be used as well, of course, but the low firepower of the phaser drogues, and the fact that drone-armed scouts can already use drones without blinding themselves, makes the difference in capability less pronounced for these ships.

SFB DATABASE

MONSTER SPECIAL RULES THE ORB



There are many monster scenarios in *Star Fleet Battles*. Most present the monster through a rather limited rule set dealing only with the specific scenario (SM0.0) in which the monster is introduced (for example, en route to Sheboygan III). Suppose, however, that the monster was encountered inside an asteroid belt, during an ion storm, or what if the planet had ground-based defenses? There is nothing in the rules (or the rules are not in one convenient location) to indicate how some monsters would be treated under different conditions. This article will seek to answer some of these unanswered questions and allow the players to make a broader use of monsters in their game play by encountering them in circumstances considerably different from the original scenario. The article will also seek to provide ideas for the use of a monster in "design your own" scenarios, some of which when fully fleshed out by the players, might be published.

The first appearance of this feature was in *Captain's Log #29*, and at that time a compilation of all rules found in various places in the rulebook that dealt with monsters was provided. This information is not repeated in this article although some cross-references to some specific rules are provided.

Sequencing note: As of *Captain's Log #44* all monsters covered by (SM0.0) scenario numbers had been covered. We have reviewed monsters published in various *Captain's Logs* and in historical scenarios in other products and determined a publication order.

BACKGROUND: Among the "monsters" found in the records, the "Orb" (SL192.0) is regarded as most likely a myth of some kind, or perhaps a translation glitch during the downloading process which caused an entertainment drama to be included in the file on unusual space phenomena. The data indicates that any ship encountering the Orb forever vanishes into the "toy box" (so to speak) of a mysterious and apparently all-powerful species known only as "the Masters."

As there are no survivors (or witnesses) to the operations of the Orb, the only known "historical" source is a series of curious data files of the Pharoah Cartel, purportedly provided by Captain Deth O'Kay. The means by which O'Kay transmitted these data files is unknown. (The Pharoah Cartel claims they "mysteriously appeared" in a closed and sealed office. See the introduction to the fiction story "The First Round" in *Captain's Log #3*.) These data files began (so the story goes) appearing in Y180, shortly after Captain O'Kay and his ship, the Orion heavy cruiser *Hammerfield*, vanished without trace late in Y179. Ships have vanished before and since the *Hammerfield*. (For all that is known, Captain O'Kay may have simply retired and his ship was renamed. The cartels are not known for their honesty and integrity after all.) It is possible that even though the records of the Federation, Klingon Empire, Romulan Empire, Vudar Enclave, and Tholian Holdfast do not mention the destruction of the *Hammerfield*, the Jindarians or Andromedans, or even other Orions, might have destroyed the ship.

However, this does leave open the question of what the goal of the Pharoah Cartel would be in fostering such a myth (leading back to the probability that the whole thing is just a fictionalized drama, perhaps created after it was determined that the *Hammerfield* was lost to unknown causes). There is, after all, no doubt that the *Hammerfield* did disappear from the record. There are files, gathered by the various intelligence and police agencies, which indicate the Pharoah Cartel lost contact with the ship in late Y179 and claimed they had no idea what happened to it. Yet once again, this might have been some kind of ruse on the part of the Pharoah Cartel. It is a mystery that remains unsolved.

The data files supposedly provided by O'Kay are short on specifics. It can be confirmed that various ships that O'Kay named in his "reports" are in fact "missing," but any researcher putting together a background for a drama about a near-omnipotent alien species that steals entire starships could have accessed files to find names of ships that historically vanished. One might look in old Earth files for the number of times the USS *Proteus*, USS *Cyclops*, and USS *Nereus* turn up in entertainment media, among other missing ships. So the fact that O'Kay claims "The Masters" also kidnapped these other ships is not a proof that it is so.

Further, while the "O'Kay files" are the sole source of all the information we have on both the mysterious "Masters" and their "Orb" construct, O'Kay claimed the Orb never challenged his ship.

The O'Kay files are thus only a secondary source about the Orb in and of themselves. O'Kay claims to be recounting stories provided by other "captive captains," particularly in the case of the Orb he cites a Romulan sub-commander named M'chal'k, about how their ships came to be "toys of the Masters." O'Kay claims The Masters choose ships that have extraordinary captains, exceptional crews, or are special in some way. Perhaps the Orb was not used to challenge O'Kay because it was his ship that was "special," reportedly having been heavily modified (see *Captain's Log #3*), rather than himself or his crew? O'Kay's principal claim to fame (other than commanding the *Hammerfield*) seems to have been his escape from the brig of the Federation command cruiser *Lexington* in Y173.

In any case, the claims are fantastic, attributing to the Masters incalculable power of what must be a technological nature. The Masters, according to O'Kay, are able to erect energy barriers, which they apparently call an "arena," with no visible supporting structure, encompassing areas of space at least 420,000 kilometers by 300,000 kilometers by 300,000 kilometers. Simultaneously with the appearance of an "arena" around the selected ship, the Orb is transported into place, appearing suddenly on the ship's scans. (Or possibly the ship is transported into the arena from its home space.) While the Andromedans have more than amply demonstrated the capability to transport ships, the scale of the power the Masters would have to be using to accomplish the creation of an arena dwarfs the Andromedan's efforts to inconsequence. It should be noted that while the sudden appearance of such an "arena" would seem to be a major event, space is vast and the missing ships all generally disappear far beyond the reach of normal scans (which is why they are missing "without trace"). Still, the Masters must be manipulating energy levels on a scale exceeding the output of several stellar masses to accomplish what they are purportedly doing.

O'Kay claims that the "arenas" are why there is no trace left behind as the Masters transport the entire arena to their "gaming area." Any wreckage blown off a ship (or the Orb), or shuttles

launched by a ship, or log buoys jettisoned by a ship during its encounter are all transported along with the arena. Further, the ship's track ends where the arena's barrier appeared, and the energy signature of the ship's movements ends; the trail goes cold for anyone tracking the ship.

Strangely, the "arena barrier" itself, despite clearly being an energy construct, and detectable on a ship's systems while active, according to O'Kay, leaves no detectable trace. The barrier is impervious to all weapons, and to scans (there is nothing detectable through it). Further, a ship trying to pass through the barrier is brought to an abrupt halt, sustaining damage to its shields or its own structure if its shields are down [see (P17.0) for more information on the arena barrier]. Conversely, the Orb "bounces off" of the barrier, sustaining no harm (SL192.4515).

The Orb itself has the apparent mass of a dreadnought or larger ship (size class 2), making it considerably smaller than a starbase. O'Kay's files indicate that the various captains he has spoken with believe the Orb is a fully automated construct as their sensors have never detected any life forms (but also say that their sensors have never penetrated the Orb's hull). Its programming appears very rudimentary for the tool of such a supposedly advanced culture. It maintains a constant speed of Warp 2.5 (Speed 16) (SL192.451), and is apparently able to move in any direction at will. It appears to mostly move erratically in the sense that there is no pattern to its movements (SL192.4512), unless it suddenly adopts a near collision course on the ship it is "testing" (SL192.4514).

The O'Kay files are the only record of the Orb. There are any number of incidents of vanished ships in all empires for which there is no explanation, and often not even a trace of wreckage much less a log buoy or other disaster beacon. It is entirely possible that the Orb (if it and its masters are not a myth) is responsible for some of those disappearances, perhaps even before the beginning of recorded history (the Masters may even pre-date the various precursor empires, such as the "Old Kings"). For this reason it is possible that the Orb has operated in other regions of the Milky Way Galaxy. (Unless the Masters are even more powerful than has been assumed to date, it is unlikely that their reach extends into the Magellanic Cloud, Tholian Home Galaxy, or the Andromedan Galaxy, but perhaps each of those galaxies, and others, have their own analogs to "The Masters.")

The O'Kay files indicate something of a disconnect in the Master's attitude. The Orb seeks to find captains (or ships) that can win with minimal crew losses (SL192.5), yet O'Kay also tells us that they allowed a ship (the Orion Pirate Cruiser *Heavensent*) to be destroyed in their games, saving only its captain for future games. (See the fiction story "The First Round" in *Captain's Log #3*.) Perhaps the Masters are becoming senile or are schizophrenic?

As "space monsters" go, the Orb is not a major threat. The loss of a single cruiser from a given empire in a given decade is simply not significant (other than to the members of the crew and their families), unless that empire is very small (the Tholian Holdfast, WYN Cluster, or Lyran Democratic Republic).

The Orb appears unable to land on planets and seems to avoid any location where it might encounter multiple ships. The O'Kay files do mention the Masters using terrain features in their "games," [see (SL50.0) in *Captain's Log #3* for an example] but even the O'Kay files make no mention of the Orb "testing" the defenses of a planet or base. Its weapons are, however, quite capable of doing major damage to such installations (SL192.452).

One of the strongest indicators of the technological prowess of the Masters is that the Orb remains fully operational until it is destroyed. The Masters are apparently able to reconstitute the Orb to test another victim. (Or perhaps they have a number of Orbs in stock and simply launch a new one? Or perhaps the Orb is indestructible and simply ceases to operate when a damage-counter has recorded a certain amount of damage?)

Destroying Orbs is, again according to the O'Kay files, a matter of sheer damage (SL192.454); the Orb remains fully functional until the point of destruction. However, as there is no explosion, it is possible that the Orb simply assesses the damage done to it, and when the counter reaches a certain level it is transported out of the arena.

Every empire would try to find a means to communicate with an Orb (and through it the Masters) if it encountered one. Some might have the goal of making it (or its Masters) an ally in war, some would perhaps seek a means to convince them not to kidnap any more of their ships (and return those they have kidnapped). There is no record of any communication with the Orb (or the Masters), except, of course, for the O'Kay files.

UNDEFINED RULES AREAS

DISENGAGEMENT: The Orb is, according to the O'Kay files, impossible to escape from because an "arena" (SL192.2) surrounds the area in which it appears. There simply is no escape possible, not even by sublight disengagement. At the whim of the Masters, a ship attempting sublight disengagement may be spared, perhaps its crew and hull being used as "spare parts" for other "playing pieces," or the Orb can be directed to destroy the ship. There is no escaping the Masters. This is a guess pieced together from the O'Kay files, since it is not possible to directly interview O'Kay (or the Masters) and of course there are no recovered log buoys. [If the Orb is controlled by an empire (SG9.0), unless the Masters are also controlling it, it probably would not be able to detect a ship that had successfully disengaged by sublight, but there is no way to know for certain.]

The Orb is not a living monster. (Well . . . maybe it is some kind of biological construct but there is no way to know and the O'Kay files really do not address the issue.) Even so, cloaks (G13.0) are completely useless against it (SL192.4534). [The Orb would not be affected by "hidden cloaking" (G13.6) inside an arena, it will know precisely where the cloaked unit is should it choose to attack it.] Generated (to include lent) electronic warfare, including the effects of cloaking devices or distortion generators (MG1.0), do not reduce the damage the Orb will cause [(D6.397) and (SL192.4534)].

The Orb probably can guide the seeking weapons of an "allied ship" (SG9.0) against any target based on its known technology. Cloaked decoys will not fool the Orb (SL192.4534); it will always know which is the ship and which is the decoy.

The Orb itself never disengages (according to the O'Kay files), but continues operating until it is "destroyed," achieves victory, or until some specified time limit is reached (SL192.3).

Jindarian asteroid disengagement (R16.1D) will not work versus the Orb due to the very advanced sensor technology available to the Masters (again according to the O'Kay files). The Orb has no problem identifying which asteroids, if you happen to be a Jindarian and the action is in an asteroid field, are Jindarian ships. The Orb could probably tell an ally (SG9.0) which rock is a Jindarian ship and could be told to attack such ships.

BASES: Fixed bases are apparently never the target of the Orb, as they can do little more than fire at the Orb and such a situation is too boring to interest the Masters. At least the O'Kay files make no mention of the Masters testing, or even abducting, a base or planet with its ground defense. (Earlier references that perhaps the Aurora colony, among others in other empires, had been abducted were disproved by the establishment of contact with the Omega Octant.) It should be noted, however, that there are cases of entire bases vanishing without trace, just as entire planetary systems have (see the files on the Federation Aurora colony, the Klingon Kraknora colony, and others). Maybe the Masters have abducted some, but perhaps only as repair stations for their toys as O'Kay does not mention being pitted against a base.

DOCKING: Whether or not the Orb can dock is a matter of conjecture. Certainly the Masters seem to have some control

over their construct, and it is assumed (based on this) that the Orb can dock, but there is no absolute proof of this. At least there is nothing in the O'Kay files. What is known is that the Orb can generate a tractor-repulsor beam (SL192.4521), and such weapons can be used as normal tractor beams (E9.4), so the capability appears to be there. However, as the Orb never stops moving (at least in the reports by O'Kay) (SL192.451) and is apparently immune to the tractor beams of opposing ships (SL192.4534), docking is generally not possible during combat conditions (which are the only conditions under which the Orb is encountered). According to O'Kay the Orb is also immune to being boarded (SL192.4534), and while not a concise statement, it can be assumed that this means that shuttles cannot crash land aboard it.

It can be presumed that if a ship is the target of the Orb and is docked to a base, the Orb will attack under the provisions of (C13.73). If two or more units are docked together, the Orb will attack under the provisions of (C13.94). The Orb will probably not attack ships internally docked to any larger unit (starbase, sector base, stellar fortress), and will not attack the larger unit in an attempt to get to the internally docked unit. That's unless the Masters provide a considerably scaled-up construct with enough raw firepower to attack such things (not something to be imagined). Note that the Orb only attacks shuttles, drones, and other non-plasma seeking weapons by means of its monster close-in defense system (SL192.4531) and will otherwise ignore all units of size class 6 or smaller for all purposes, except for plasma torpedoes, which it only engages with phaser-Gs (SL192.4528).

The Orb would probably treat a Tholian pinwheel as a single ship for all purposes. Note that damage between the three component ships of a pinwheel will have to be apportioned by the pinwheel rules (C14.0). However, the Masters would probably consider the Orb attacking a pinwheel to not be exciting and would use their ability to transport starships to separate the component ships for a more exciting battle of maneuver.

The Orb obviously cannot enter into orbit (P8.472), not even if it is operating as an allied unit under (SG9.0), because, as noted elsewhere, it never stops moving. Perhaps the Masters could order the Orb to orbit a planet (or even to operate at a different speed), but this is not mentioned in the O'Kay files.

MONSTER CLOSE-IN DEFENSE SYSTEM: The Orb has what appears (from O'Kay's descriptions) to be a (E6.0) monster close-in defense system (SL192.4531). This is not actually an organic system (at least it is believed not to be), but a technological system that seems to be very limited. This would seem to make it very vulnerable to a mass of seeking weapons, but this presupposes the Masters allow a fight where it is possible to launch such a mass. In any case, the Orb's monster close-in defense system is apparently unable to engage plasma torpedoes, and it uses what appears to be a pair of phaser-Gs for this role (SL192.4528). However, the operation of the phaser-Gs as a plasma defense is erratic, as a ship could lure the Orb into firing them at itself and then launch plasma torpedoes with no fear of warhead reduction (SL192.4528).

TRACTORS: The Orb is apparently immune to tractor energy "holding" it (SL192.4534). Why this is so is a matter of conjecture, as the O'Kay files do not provide any evidence. It can be presumed that the weapon effects of Bolosco integrated warp tractors, e.g., tractor punch (OG18.35), operate normally, but tractor effects, e.g., pressure field (OG18.36), would have no effect. Bolosco focused tractor beams (OE27.0) and Andromedan tractor-repulsors (E9.0) will operate normally as direct-fire weapons, but cannot be used to tractor the Orb.

REPAIR: In the O'Kay files, the Orb exhibits no ability to repair damage. (Again, it may not be damaged at all due to the extremely advanced technology that is assumed for the Masters, but simply has some kind of "damage clock" that results in it shutting down.) It is probable if the Orb were actually damaged that the Masters have some system for repairing it (or resetting

its damage clock) before again deploying it for battle. It may even be possible for the Masters to reset the Orb's damage clock during a battle, but there is no indication in the files that they have done so. Despite damage, the Orb is either fully capable or fully destroyed; damage does not weaken it unless it is sufficient to destroy it.

WEBS: The Orb seems to be affected by web as any normal ship (SL192.4532), except that running into a web does not seem to damage it. This is somewhat unusual given the Orb's immunity to tractor beams (SL192.4534), but it does appear to be true (or at least the O'Kay files are consistent on the point). The Orb's own weapons are blocked by web as are those of any other non-Tholian technology ship. Web fists also function normally against the Orb.

OTHER SYSTEMS: The Orb can be displaced (G18.71) as its rules specifically allow this (SL192.4533).

The Orb can be placed in stasis (G16.63) because this is allowed by its own rules (SL192.4533).

The Orb cannot be boarded by any means (SL192.4534) including by a hit-and-run raid.

The Orb cannot climb a temporal elevator shaft (G31.222).

The Orb moves at Speed 16 continuously. It is probable that if the Orb were used by the Masters to test ships in earlier time periods, that it would have been programmed to move at a slower speed (and with a reduced weapons load). It is also probable that beginning in Y180 the Orb may have been modified (or perhaps was always capable of) to move at a faster speed to test advanced technology ships that were then beginning to appear. Again, the weapons load would probably have been modified (increased in this case) to test such ships.

The initial direction and movement distance of the Orb is always determined at the start of the turn (SL192.451) and will be adjusted in mid-turn, perhaps several times, after the initial plot is completed.

No "critical hit" affects the Orb (SL192.4534).

The Orb normally moves in the Order of Precedence (C1.313) as most monsters, i.e., before any other unit is to move on the current turn. If the Orb is moving as a seeking weapon in pursuit of a ship as a result of (SL192.4514), it moves as a seeking weapon in the Order of Precedence (C1.313), i.e., it will move after the ship it is pursuing. The Orb cannot sideslip (SL192.4516), but as it has a turn mode of Zero (SL192.451) this is largely irrelevant when it is in seeking mode.

The Orb does not use Tactical Intelligence (D17.0), at least insofar as can be determined, as it has no need to do so.

The Orb technically can never be "surprised" (D18.0), but obviously the Masters might have the Orb surprise a ship they are testing (the Masters do seem to have a psychotic streak to go along with their apparent schizophrenia).

The Orb is not fooled by pseudo-plasma torpedoes and will ignore them.

The Orb technically cannot use Hidden Deployment (D20.0) as it never stops moving. Of course, the question remains as to how much control the Masters have over their construct. If the Masters can program the Orb to hide in a piece of terrain to surprise some of their toys in the middle of some other "game," it might be presumed they have done so.

The Orb is size class 2 (Annex #12).

Heel nippers affect the Orb (YE24.345); they score one point of damage and force the Orb to turn. (This damage point would normally be scored on a warp engine, but the Orb does not seem to have warp engines. How it moves is unknown and not addressed in the O'Kay files.) Note that even though a heel nipper can force the Orb to turn, the Orb would [if on a seeking trajectory (SL192.4514)] simply turn back towards its target on the next impulse. Note that if the Orb were not on a seeking trajectory, the heel nipper would change the Orb's direction of movement for the remainder of its current run defined by (SL192.4812). If heel

nippers caused the Orb to backtrack its course (SL192.4514), the Orb would adopt a pursuit course.

The Souldra would probably hate the Orb, as black shards could not attach to it and drain energy to power the shields of their ships [(OJ4.226) and (OJ4.214)].

SHIP EXPLOSIONS: Ship explosions damage the Orb, but such a result is generally pointless [unless the Orb is operating as an ally in a larger battle (SG9.0)]. The Orb itself does not explode when destroyed.

ENVELOPING WEAPONS: Enveloping plasma torpedoes envelop the Orb because it is not a living monster [Annex #12 and (FP5.36)]. Hellbores can be fired in enveloping mode because the Orb is not a living monster [Annex #12 and (E10.54)]. Plasmatic pulsar devices apply their entire damage to the Orb because it is not, well, a living monster (E11.353). Drex enveloping hypercannon shells remain effective against the Orb (OE16.323); i.e., a hit scores six times the listed damage.

EXPANDING SPHERES: The Orb is affected by expanding spheres as ships are.

LABS: The Orb is subject to being overwhelmed by seeking weapons. It has no lab capabilities for use in identifying seeking weapons [although it will know if plasma torpedoes are targeted on it (SL192.4528)] or mines or other objects. In fact, this is one of the Orb's weaknesses, as it will fire all of its phaser-G shots at the first plasma that reaches Range 1 (SL192.4528). If multiple plasma torpedoes are at Range 1, it will randomly choose just one of them for all eight phaser-3-shots (SL192.4528). This does mean that a single plasma-D (or even a plasma-K) could be used to decoy the phaser-Gs before other, larger, plasma torpedoes hit it. This is one of the significant weaknesses of the Orb's programming reported by O'Kay that seems to point to the senility of the Masters.

DROGUES: The Orb treats launched drogues (G34.0) as size-class-6 targets, i.e., its monster close-in defense system will engage a deployed drogue if it is in range.

MINES: Mines operate normally against the Orb, although it will never trigger its own mines (SL192.4522-A). Command-controlled captor mines could be ordered to fire on the Orb. Given the Orb's ability to ignore cloaking devices and extremely advanced technology, it could probably detect a minefield (M7.11) and sweep mines. This would require programming by the Masters giving it more options in using its weapons. It is unlikely the Masters have ever done so as once again they would probably find such activity boring. The Orb could probably also engage defense satellites if the Masters programmed it to do so.

DESTRUCTION: The Orb is easy to destroy: simply score the requisite damage required (SL192.454) and do so in the time interval allowed (SL192.3) without being destroyed (or, if you wish to please the Masters, too badly damaged) yourself.

ORB AS AN ALLY IN (SG9.0): The Orb has limitations in that it is not very good at "station-keeping," i.e., remaining in formation unless the force operates at its set speed. It would have to be assumed that the Orb will operate as a ship (within the speed limitation), and not move in random directions if operating as an ally. If it is moving slower than the ships it is supporting, it will be left behind, so it is difficult to use as a weapon to hit the enemy and open the way or count on for a follow-up attack. The weapons will still be of a random nature and have limited engagement ranges, although the ally can direct it to engage specific enemy targets within the range limits of its weapons. It will not cut swaths through enemy drone or plasma swarms, but will utterly ignore these (unless they are targeted on it). On the plus side, it is big and scary. It can assume guidance of its ally's seeking weapons and this is a plus in that the enemy's ECM efforts will not distract these weapons. Also on the plus side it is also not very intelligent; it will not consider its own survival as a goal, making it a good sacrificial lamb.

The interactions of the Orb with other monsters would have

to be defined by special scenario rules in most cases. The random nature of the Orb's movement would make an engagement with a planet killer (SM1.0) pretty senseless unless the Masters exerted direct control over its movements. It has no lab capability or ancillary systems (probes, shuttles) that can be adapted to weapons to destroy some monsters. As such, it is unlikely that the Masters used the Orb to "test" any monsters.

TERRAIN

ATMOSPHERE: The Orb could probably enter atmosphere hexes as any ship could if it could operate slowly enough to do so. It would probably be destroyed if it entered atmosphere at its normal operating speed (SL192.451). It can otherwise be presumed that if the Masters chose to assemble an arena around any significant feature (Class-M or larger planets) with an atmosphere, that the Orb would continue its movement plot by circling around the atmosphere rather than immolating itself. {Roll a die with an odd result being a turn to the left and an even result being a turn to the right. The resulting turn will be the minimum necessary, usually 60°, to avoid entering the atmosphere but continue pursuing the course [or target if one is selected under (SL192.4514)]. The turn might be greater than 60° if the atmosphere is that of a gas giant. The turn will be made regardless of whether or not the Orb's turn mode is currently under the effects of a heel nipper.}

ASTEROIDS: The Orb is unaffected by asteroids (P3.0), dust (P13.0), rings (P2.223), and the tails of comets (P18.0), except that it gains the benefit of the natural ECM of these terrain types. The Orb's ability to maneuver through these terrain types is a facet of its maneuverability and highly advanced sensors, and probably that the Masters do not want to make things easy for their toys. These terrain types affect seeking weapons launched by the Orb normally, i.e., the Masters provide them none of the benefits of the Orb.

RADIATION: The Orb is unaffected by radiation zones (P15.0) or heat zones (P10.0). The Orb could probably penetrate the WYN Radiation Zone (P7.0) and the Maghadim Radiation Zone (MS1.1111) and not be affected by them. However, it is probable that if the Masters wanted to send the Orb into WYN space they would simply transport it there rather than having it waste time passing through the zone. If the Masters (or some analog of them) operate in the Magellanic Cloud the Maghadim Radiation Zone would probably be avoided in the same manner.

The Orb would probably be affected by the gravity of black holes (in terms of being pulled closer). Given the random nature of its programming, it is unlikely the Masters would combine the Orb with a black hole as a terrain feature unless they seriously modified its programming and its speed. If the Orb were to enter a black hole for any reason (pursuing a target which itself has entered the black hole) it would be destroyed.

GRAVITY: The Orb may or may not be damaged by gravity waves (P9.0). This is dependent on what the Masters program its assumed damage clock to do. Even if a gravity wave turned the Orb to a new direction of travel (P9.32), the Orb's turn mode is such (assuming it was on a pursuit course) that it would be able to turn back towards its target almost immediately. If it were not on a pursuit course, it would probably continue its previous movement plot in the new direction until the plot ran out.

PULSARS: The Orb would probably be affected by pulsars (P5.0), and for this reason it is unlikely the Masters would employ the Orb near such phenomena.

NEBULA: The Orb is not affected by nebula (P6.0). This would include the Qixavalor Cloud (OP1.0) and RYN Nebula (OR19.0) in the Omega Octant. The Orb would be affected by explosions triggered by weapons fire in the Qixavalor Cloud and its own weapons systems would trigger explosions. The Orb's movement would not trigger any explosions (OP1.137).

BARRIER: If the Orb hits a tournament barrier (P17.0), it

does not take five points of damage (SL192.4515) and does not stop, but simply bounces off and continues moving (SL192.4515).

SUNSPOTS: The Orb is unaffected by sunspots (P11.0).

RULES FOR ORBS

EW: The Orb is unaffected by generated electronic warfare (D6.397). It benefits from any ECM it gains naturally (D6.3143), or from offensive electronic warfare (G24.219) being lent to a unit firing at it. It is not affected by natural electronic warfare (D6.3143). The Orb would ignore any offensive electronic warfare lent to it for all purposes and would not further benefit from any lent ECCM, so there is no point in doing so. The Orb is not negatively impacted by arc-jamming (OG8.225), but units firing weapons at it may be.

PLASMA: Plasma torpedoes damage the Orbs normally, including enveloped plasma torpedoes.

PHASING: The Orb can detect Souldra units that have phased out (OG13.424), but cannot attack them by any means until they phase back in.

MANEUVER: The Orb cannot perform erratic maneuvers because its own rules do not say it can (C10.15). The erratic maneuver status of a unit the Orb is attacking has no affect on the Orb's weapons (C10.43).

The Orb has a turn mode of zero; it cannot use directed turn modes, change speed in mid-turn, or sideslip.

The Orb cannot perform a high energy yurn or change speed at any time. The Orb cannot use tactical maneuvers.

If all ships have been destroyed (or have disengaged if the Masters allowed such for some reason), the Orb would probably be transported by the Masters back to its holding area.

BACKLASH: The Orb will generate an energy backlash from Loryiill flame shields (OG1.132) and a flame shield will protect a target from the Orb's attacks.

MUTINY: In cases where multiple ships are involved in a battle against the Orb and there is no arena, the "mutiny" (G6.0) of one ship does not end the scenario although the ship may (indeed must) disengage (G6.61). Obviously, if all the ships mutinied, the scenario would be over as the mutinied ships would not attack the Orb or attempt any further defense of units the Orb might attack, and would disengage. In the case of a mutiny of a ship within the arena . . . there is no escape and the ship would have to continue fighting unless the Masters chose to intervene and end the battle.

COMBAT: If The Orb were operating as part of a fleet, it would be considered a single ship.

The Orb does have a quarter-turn delay between firing weapons over turn breaks [(SL192.4523) and (SL192.4526)].

Type-VI drones and plasma-K torpedoes damage the Orb as if the Orb were a ship (FD2.54).

Anti-drones, shield crackers, and web breakers do not affect the Orb.

Plasma-D racks cannot engage the Orb in defensive mode (FP10.212).

The Orb can attack small ground bases or units landed on planets with an atmosphere with the normal atmospheric effects on its weapons (P2.54), but such encounters are regarded as unlikely. The Orb cannot enter atmosphere hexes.

MISSING RULES

All drones and other seeking weapons (this includes, for example, ultrawarp missiles, which are not normally self-guiding) launched by the Orb are self-guiding. If the Orb is no longer able to guide them (has moved beyond 35 hexes range or has displaced) and the seeking weapon does not have its own lock-on (obviously this does not apply to plasma torpedoes) it will go inert. While the Orb retains guidance any electronic warfare is ignored by the seeking weapons to include a cloaking device. If the seeking weapon is released to its own guidance, electronic

warfare (to include cloaking devices) operates normally against the seeking weapons. Even if still under guidance by the Orb, seeking weapons launched by the Orb will be distracted by wild weasels (wild scout PFs or wild SWAC shuttles) normally.

If the ship is moving at a speed slower than the Orb for any reason, even if it intends to move as fast as or faster than the Orb later in the turn, the Orb will adopt a seeking plot as given under (SL192.4514).

SCENARIO IDEA

Set up the standard scenario (SL192.0). At the end of Turn #1 determine the map sector that is furthest from both the Orb and the ship. At the end of Turn #2 that map sector is removed from play by being enclosed in a tournament barrier. If two map sectors are equidistant, roll a die to determine which is removed. This process is repeated on each of the subsequent turns until only one map sector remains. If at the end of Turn #5 the Orb and the ship are both in separate map sectors, the Orb will be displaced to the corresponding hex of the map sector the ship is in before Energy Allocation of Turn #6. For example, if at the end of Turn #5 the Orb is in hex 0408 of map sector #1 and the ship is in hex 1913 of map sector #2 the Orb will be moved to hex 1808 of map sector #2. If at the end of any given turn the Orb and the ship are on completely opposite edges of the map (ship in map sector #1 and the Orb in Map sector #3 or #6), no map sector will be eliminated from play on that turn. The removed sector will be delayed until the following turn. This is to prevent the Orb from being isolated from the ship by having the two center sectors be removed from play separating the ship and the Orb with tournament barriers.

WARP-REFITTED ERA

Speed: 8

Destruction: 125 damage points.

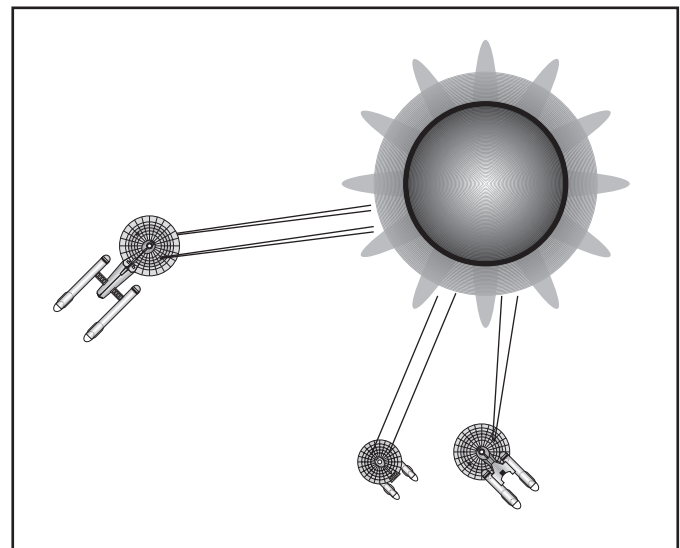
No overloads, drones are slow speed, all seeking weapon warheads do half damage.

Range 8 Weapon

- 2: 1xtype-G plasma
- 3-4: 1xtype-IV drone
- 5-6: 1xphoton torpedo
- 7-8: 1xdisruptor
- 9-10: 1xlight tractor-repulsor
- 11: 1xtype-F plasma torpedo
- 12: 1xphaser-4

Special Weapon

- 1-2: Mine scatter (1xT-bomb)
- 3-4: 2xtype-I drones
- 5: No special weapon
- 6: Random displacement



EARLY YEARS ERA

Speed 12

Destruction: 166 damage points.

No overloads; drones are moderate speed.

Range 8 Weapon

2: 1xtype-S plasma
 3-4: 1xtype-V drones
 5-6: 2xphoton torpedoes
 7-8: 2xdisruptors
 9-10: 2xlight TR beams
 11: 1xtype-G plasma
 12: 1xphaser-4

Special Weapon

1-2: Mine scatter (2xT-bomb)
 3-4: 2xtype-II drones
 5: No special weapon
 6: Random displacement

MIDDLE YEARS THROUGH THE GENERAL WAR ERA

See (SL192.45).

ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY SHIPS

Speed 24

Destruction: 325 damage points.

All weapons are overloaded if the range allows and the weapon has an overload function. All plasma torpedoes are sabot types.

Range 8 Weapon

2: 2xtype-R plasma
 3-4: 4xtype-IVF drones
 5-6: 4xphoton torpedoes
 7-8: 4xdisruptor
 9-10: 3xheavy TR beams
 11: 2xtype-M plasma
 12: 4xphaser-4s

Special Weapon

1-2: Mine scatter (6xT-bomb)
 3-4: 8xtype-IF drones
 5: No special weapon
 6: Random displacement

OMEGA OCTANT

Speed 16

Destruction: 250 damage points.

All weapons are overloaded if the range allows and the weapon has an overload function. Tachyon missiles are propulsion-32, armor-8, warhead-24, no weaponry, endurance-3 turns, one point of negative tractor, and no other special abilities. Ultrawarp missiles all have brick warheads.

Range 8 Weapon

2: 1x super heavy 2
 implosion torpedo
 3-4: 2xtachyon missiles
 5-6: 2xtachyon guns
 7-8: 2xfireballs
 9-10: 2xheavy TR beams
 11: 1xheavy implosion torpedo
 12: 2xheavy gauss cannon

Special Weapon

1-2: Mine scatter
 3-4: 6x ultrawarp missile
 5: No special weapon
 6: Random displacement

MAGELLANIC CLOUD

Speed 16

Destruction: 250 damage points.

All mass driver missiles are anti-ship missiles.

Range 8 Weapon

2: 4xtype-E plasma
 3-4: 8xmass driver missiles
 5-6: 2x 3-turn-arming CPAs
 7-8: 2xnarrow aperture NBs
 9-10: 2xheavy TR beams
 11: 2xtype-E plasma torps
 12: 2xheavy warp-tuned lasers

Special Weapon

1-2: Mine scatter
 3-4: 6xmass driver missiles
 5: No special weapon
 6: Random displacement

Brothers of the Anarchist

Some conversions are straightforward; here are two involving the Tholians. Some are more historically plausible than others, but all can produce an interesting ship design.

Semi-generic non-Tholian units such as auxiliaries, Free Traders, Armed Priority Transports, freighters, and the like are converted into the phaser pattern; semi-generic Tholian units are already in this phaser pattern and can remain unchanged or could be changed to the standard pattern of the new owner.

Most refits available to the original owner could be installed by the new owner one year after they become available. Refits unique to one empire or the other are covered below.

Mech-links remain but are modified to carry the PFs of the new owners. Aegis is unchanged.

PART XXXII: THOLIANS vs. GORNS

For a brief historical time, Gorn ships helped defend Tholian space. A Gorn ship that was too damaged to take home might have been donated to the Tholians by departing Gorns. On the other hand, the destruction of the Tholian Holdfast by a Klingon attack might have left Tholian ships as refugees and the Gorns might have offered a safe haven for the people in exchange for their ships.

THOLIAN SHIPS TO GORN TECHNOLOGY

Replace a single web generator with a plasma-D rack RH.

Replace paired web generators with plasma-D racks LS/RS.

Replace disruptors on size-class-4 ships with plasma-F.

Replace paired disruptors on size-class-3 ships with a move cost of 1 (or size-class-2 ships) with one plasma-S and one plasma-F.

Replace paired disruptors on size-class-3 ships with a move cost less than 1 with plasma-F.

Replace Web Casters with plasma-F.

Replace each pair of photon torpedoes with a plasma-S and a plasma-F. Replace each single photon with a plasma-F.

GORN SHIPS TO THOLIAN TECHNOLOGY

Replace each plasma torpedo with a disruptor.

Replace any plasma-D racks with web generators. If there are no plasma-D racks, you may but are not required to replace one heavy weapon with a web generator.

PART XXXIII: THOLIANS vs. KZINTIS

For a brief historical time, Kzinti ships helped defend Tholian space. A Kzinti ship that was too damaged to take home might have been donated to the Tholians by departing Kzintis. On the other hand, the destruction of the Tholian Holdfast by a Klingon attack might have left Tholian ships as refugees and the Kzintis might have offered a safe haven for the people in exchange for their ships.

KZINTI SHIPS TO THOLIAN TECHNOLOGY

Replace one drone rack or ADD with (on a size class-4 ship, two on a size-class-3 ship) with web generators. Replace any other drone racks with phaser-1s with appropriate arcs.

THOLIAN SHIPS TO KZINTI TECHNOLOGY

Replace each web generator with a drone rack.

Replace each web caster with a disruptor.

Replace each photon with a disruptor.

Ask Admiral Vanaxilth

EXPANDING SPHERE GENERATORS

Francois Lemay asks: A Lyran CL is in hex 1414 heading B, a badly beaten up Lyran CA is in hex 1514 heading B, and a badly beaten up Lyran DW is in hex 1412 heading C. A Kzinti drone cruiser is in hex 1415 heading E at Speed 16. (It beat up on the Lyran CA with six heavy drones earlier in the turn.)

During Impulse Activity for Impulse #13 of Turn #2, the light cruiser tractors the heavy cruiser and war destroyer, so the light cruiser's pseudo speed is 4, the heavy cruiser's pseudo speed is 7, and the war destroyer's pseudo speed is Zero. Two ESGs at radius two, strength five, from the light cruiser, are now active. The war destroyer is outside of the spheres. The drone cruiser launches a shuttle in hex 1415 heading E.

On Impulse #14, Speed 7 and 16 move. The heavy cruiser sideslips to hex 1513 heading B, bringing the light cruiser to hex 1413 heading B and the war destroyer to hex 1411 heading C, with the expanding spheres hitting the drone cruiser and the shuttle.

Do we pause further movement of the drone cruiser and apply the expanding sphere generator's damage to the drone cruiser's #6 shield after the shuttle takes its share of damage here or continue with movement before applying expanding sphere generator damage? If we continue with movement, the Kzinti drone cruiser sideslips to hex 1315 heading E.

ANSWER: When the light cruiser moves, you note that a collision with the expanding spheres has occurred and, per (G23.5131), the expanding spheres will hit the #6 shield of the drone cruiser. They will also hit the shuttle. We will assume the war destroyer wishes to treat this situation under (G23.5732), and not take any damage from the expanding spheres. Once movement is complete, you apply damage. The shuttle (assuming it is a standard admin shuttle) will take six points of damage, and the drone cruiser will take the remaining 28 points of damage. Note that had the drone cruiser moved straight ahead to 1316 while heading E, it would have passed completely through the expanding spheres, giving it a higher damage priority under (G23.52). This would have resulted in 34 points of damage to the drone cruiser (still on its #6 shield), and none to the shuttle, assuming the drone cruiser can take that much damage without being destroyed.

Follow-up question: If the drone cruiser does a high energy turn to hex 1414 heading A, does it take any damage and to which shield, if so? I am thinking no damage is applied.

ANSWER: You are correct, no impact occurs, by (G23.572). (The Kzinti admin shuttle, of course, will be hit.)

Follow-up question: What if the drone cruiser does a high energy turn to hex 1516 heading C? Is it still the #6 shield taking all 34 points of damage because of (G23.52)?

ANSWER: Correct.

Follow-up question: If the drone cruiser does a high energy turn to hex 1515 heading B, is it the #6 shield again because of (G23.5131)?

ANSWER: Correct. (In this case, the shuttle will take some of the damage.)

Follow-up question: If the drone cruiser turns to hex 1416 heading D or sideslips to hex 1416 heading E, I suspect the #6 shield will again take all 34 points of damage because of (G23.52)?

ANSWER: Again, you are correct.

It should also be noted that it is standard practice to buy Admiral Vanaxilth a quality beverage if you are going to ask him any questions involving expanding field generator damage and tractor beams. He prefers something really, really cold, like liquid methane with a sprinkle of limestone dust.

Brendan Lally asks: If one announces an ESG will form after a turn break (i.e., announced Impulse #29 or later), but apply zero power, is that different from canceling the announcement during Impulse Activity?

ANSWER: As per (G23.2131), if you do not cancel the announcement during Impulse Activity, the ESG will be activated with whatever

power is in the capacitor. If there is no power in the capacitor, the ESG is still treated as having been released (and will require a cooling period), although obviously the field will not form.

Follow-up question: Does having power in the capacitor allow for power to go unapplied to the expanding sphere generator over turn break?

ANSWER: No. Per (G23.2131), in this case the expanding sphere generator will be activated with whatever power is in the capacitor, up to five points.

Brendan Lally asks: Can you announce an expanding sphere while under passive fire control restrictions, assuming of course those restrictions will be lifted before the expanding sphere actually forms? For example, you launch a wild weasel on Impulse #10, seeking weapons hit the wild weasel during Impulse #11, you announce activation of fire control which will not be fully active until Impulse #15, then you announce ESG activation on Impulse 12, which means it will release on Impulse #16.

ANSWER: Per (D6.625), expanding sphere generators can be activated under passive fire control, but will nullify the (D19.3) benefits. Per (J3.46), the announcement (not activation) of an expanding sphere generator activation would void a wild weasel, but the sequence you describe is otherwise legal.

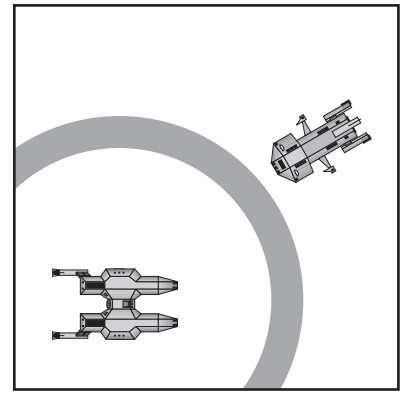
Francois Lemay asks: A Lyran ship, Speed 20, has an ESG at radius Zero and strength 20 active. It launches two shuttles at Speed 6 on Impulse #15. (An error, I am thinking, as that is what I did!) Do the shuttles get rammed by the ESG of the mothership, thus getting destroyed immediately and reducing the ESG strength to eight? The ship is moving in direction B and the shuttles are moving in direction C.

ANSWER: William Wilson replies: The shuttles, when launched, are "inside" the ESG. They will remain undamaged as long as the ship and shuttles stay in the same hex, including if they all move to the same different hex on the same impulse, regardless of speeds or facing. As soon as they are no longer in the same hex at the end of the movement segment, if the ESG is still up, the shuttles will take damage.

In your example, Speed 6 and Speed 20 both move on Impulse #16, so you can keep your shuttles alive a couple of impulses by having your ship turn or sideslip in direction C. (The shuttles, having just launched, must go straight). Depending on what you are doing with them, this might be long enough.

Brendan Lally asks: A ship with an ESG at Radius Zero and traveling at Speed 12 launches two shuttles at Speed 4. Both Speed 12 and Speed 4 move next impulse. If the shuttles and ship move into the same hex, is there any ESG interaction?

ANSWER: Rule (G23.723) is the operative rule, (G23.573) will not apply, and (G23.572) means there is no interaction, even though the ship and shuttles move at different points in the sequence. In two or three impulses, the Lyran will have a problem.

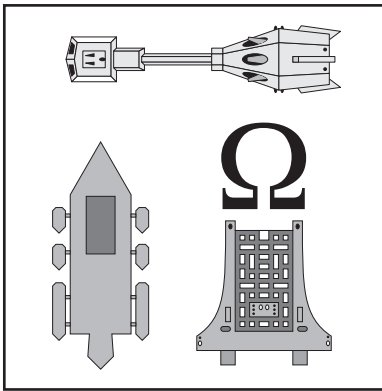


THE OMEGA OCTANT

A. David Merritt

asks: The *Omega Master Rulebook* states that warp booster packs are used by Omegan fighters. Is it possible to use them, or equivalents, on the “grown, not built fighters,” i.e., Alunda, Branthodon, and Souldra fighters?

ANSWER: The Remora cannot use pods and I would have to rule that it cannot use warp packs either. Some future product may define later Alunda fighters that can take advantage of warp packs or something similar, but the Remora cannot. Per (OJ3.5), Shards cannot use warp packs. Branthodon fighters apparently can use warp packs, as they have figured out how to add cybernetic enhancements to their bio-engineered shuttles.



Alex Lyons asks: Looking over the dark matter pulsars (OE21.0) I have found a slight problem within the arming rules. “(OE21.21) PROCEDURE: Heavy DMPs require one point of dark warp energy (OR13.033) to fire. Light DMPs require 1/2 point of dark warp energy per shot.” So that means that all pulsars must be armed with warp power only. However the next rule states: “(OE21.22) SOURCE: DMPs use a capacitor system identical to that used by phasers (H6.0). Energy to arm DMPs can come from any power source, which could be allocated or reserve power (E2.22).” This leads to being able to arm them with either impulse or warp power. Which rule is accurate?

ANSWER: Kommodore Ketrick replies: Apparently, the designer was “changing his mind” as he went. The Souldra SSDs all have impulse engine boxes, but the rules for Souldra dark warp (OR13.033) specifically note that each dark warp engine box can be designated as providing warp or impulse power at the discretion of the Souldra player at the start of any given turn.

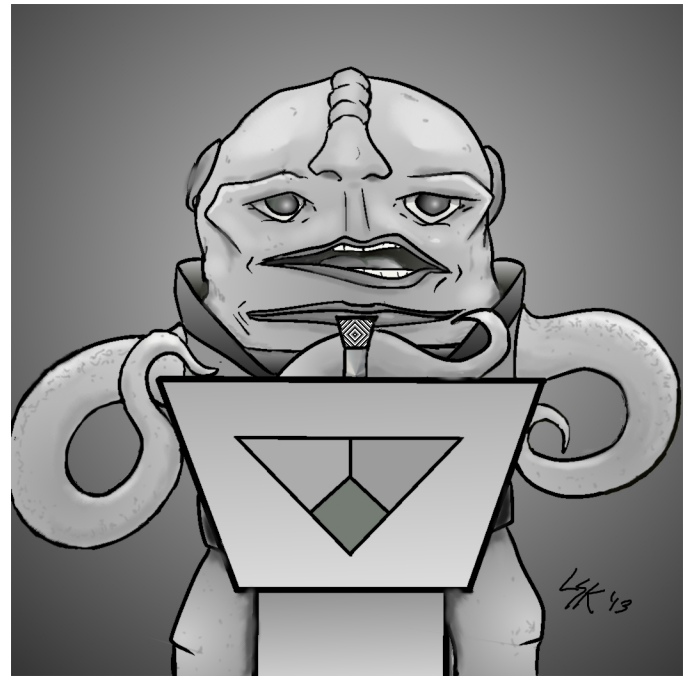
In most cases, the impulse power can be used easily enough to operate the shields and fire control, the notable exception being the Souldra dreadnought with its 12 points of impulse power, and even it can use the additional impulse power (after paying for its soul shields and fire control) for electronic warfare, erratic maneuvers, reinforcing its soul shields, or charging the dimensional phase device.

Note that in the original rules (as found in the original *Omega Module #3* rulebook published in 2000) there was no requirement to use dark warp energy, so this appears to have been an errata item provided by the designer, and the item in (OE21.22) must have been overlooked. As the addition of the dark warp requirement was added after the original publication, I think I have to say that (OE21.22) is now in error, and the second sentence should be changed to read: “Dark matter energy to arm dark matter pulsars can come from any dark matter energy power source, which could be allocated or reserve power (E2.22).”

Alex Lyons asks: On Branthodons, do the organic dragon pieces (eyebeams and the like) require active fire control from the sled in order to work?

ANSWER: Kommodore Ketrick replies: I thought it was obvious that the dragonship’s “dragon parts” do not require active fire control, but as there is no clear statement, I have created the following errata item:

(OG19.131) Dragonship dragon weapons (eyebeams, dragonfire, etc.) do not require active fire control but operate under the natural targeting systems of the “dragon” itself. By the same



token a dragonship can never benefit from the two points of ECM normally received for using passive fire control, even if the exoskeleton part of the dragonship is using passive fire control. [Otherwise all space dragons (SM7.0) would always have that benefit.] 26 March 2012

The rules are clear on the exoskeleton part needing active fire control and otherwise operating as a “ship.” The dragon part acts as a space dragon (however restricted by being lobotomized and genetically engineered). In order for the two to act together the “ship” part has to access the “dragon” parts and that gets you into how much of the “dragon” part’s lobotomized brain the ship part can access. So the ship can tell the dragon part to look this way and breathe or spit or bite or grab or turn or etc., but it cannot link the dragon part’s senses to aim and fire the ship part’s phasers or operate the ship part’s transporters or operate any of the other ship part systems. Obviously they can look through the dragon’s fire control (whatever it is) and align and use the dragon’s weapons. But the ship part’s fire control and the dragon’s fire control are not linked; they are two completely separate systems. Something keeps space dragons (irrespective of their size) from having the passive fire control bonus, so whatever dragons have as a fire control is apparently always on.

Alex Lyons asks: The Souldra black (vampire) shard has a single light dark matter pulsar with an FA arc. When attached to a ship and draining crew, can it still fire this weapon?

ANSWER: Kommodore Ketrick replies: See rule (OJ4.224) “Black Shards may not fire their weapons (even in their own defense) while attached to another unit.”

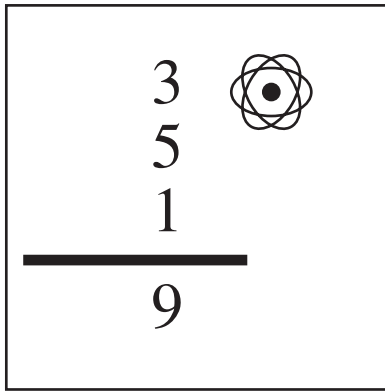
Peter D. Bakija asks: Do Hiver Barb fighters need to energize their phasers on the turn they are launched?

ANSWER: According to (OJ1.242), Barbs empty their phaser capacitors when they land but do not de-energize them. At the beginning of the scenario, if the Hiver ship has its phasers energized (weapon status-I or greater), it can be assumed that its Barbs have theirs energized as well. Although the Barb phaser capacitors will be energized, they will not have any power in them when the Barbs launch. The fighters would have to spend energy to fire their phasers.

ENERGY ALLOCATION

Josh Driscol asks:

Going over Energy Allocation forms following a game I came across something odd in a hellbore. It was allocated five points of power, but normally I see three points of power for rolling and six points of power for an overload or batteries used to overload. When we checked (H7.64) it seemed clear that you



could overload a weapon with not enough power to fire it as overload. The weapon would depend on reserve power at some point during the turn or it could not fire as standard overload. I just have a few questions on how this could be used. I was under the impression that nearly every heavy weapon had to be charged, not charged, or overloaded. Are there any weapons other than the plasmatic pulser device, which seems to have its own rules for reserve power, which cannot use this partial overload?

ANSWER: If you allocate partial overload energy to a weapon, it is irrevocably committed to being an overload and cannot fire (as a standard or overload) unless you allocate the remaining reserve power. Any weapon that cannot use (H7.6) will say so in its rules. Doing this is usually not a good idea.

Follow-up question: Can a disruptor be partly armed with one point of power? That is not enough for the standard charge. It says in (H7.52) that you can use reserve power at the time of firing or not to finish a weapon to standard charge. How about three points of power doing what the hellbore ship in my game did, but with a disruptor?

ANSWER: Weapons are generally allowed to use contingent allocation under (H7.61). You could allocate one point of power to a disruptor, but would need to allocate the remaining point from reserve in order to fire it. Otherwise, the single point of energy would be discharged at the end of the turn.

Follow-up question: In the case of a fusion beam that is charged already, the player allocates one point of energy to hold it and three points of overload energy (four points total). Could it fire as an overload or would it depend on reserve power to bring it to the full suicide overload power or be unfirable in any mode?

ANSWER: Fusion beams have a special rule in regards to suicide overloads (E7.442). If you allocate part of the energy for a suicide overload (i.e., more than the normal overload energy but less than the full suicide overload energy), the weapon can be fired as a regular overload, but this will still result in the consequences of (E7.421). (The weapon will be destroyed and cause an additional point of internal damage whether or not you fire it.)

Follow-up question: Could a plasma torpedo be allocated more than holding but less than standard arming energy? For example: I allocate three points of power to a plasma-S torpedo tube on its third turn of arming. Could it be either fired or finished with reserve power (and held) at any impulse in the turn?

ANSWER: If you apply 2+2+3 points of energy to a plasma-S launcher, you will get a plasma-G. See (FP1.96); this is a fairly common tactic. You could launch it as a plasma-S if you apply an extra point from reserve power. Rule (FP1.22) says it would not be legal to allocate, say, 2.5 points of energy to the torpedo on the third turn of arming. Your choices for the third turn of arming are to allocate two points of energy and use (FP1.221) rolling delay, or allocate full energy to complete it as a plasma-G (3), plasma-S (4), enveloping or shotgun plasma-G (6), or enveloping or shotgun plasma-S (8), respectively. Anything else results in the plasma being ejected.

THOLIAN WEB

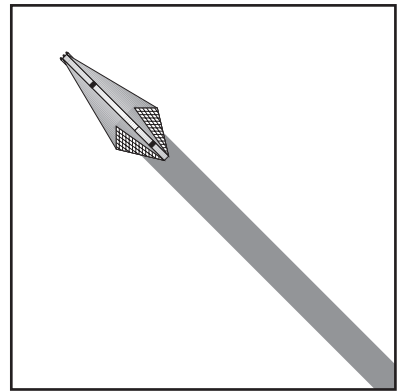
Alex Lyons asks:

The rules state on several occasions that Tholian units opposing a casting unit cannot cross its web. How is it decided if the unit is allied or opposing?

ANSWER: The scenario rules would dictate which side various forces are on in this civil war. In a historical battle, all Tholians would be on the same side, but in a tournament duel, a scenario portraying a conjectural Tholian civil war, or a simulator battle where an Orion has a web caster, etc., you could have web-using units on different sides.

Follow-up question: My group plays pickup games that do not include scenario restrictions, so in an instance where anyone can work together based on their own discretion, when are allied Tholians determined?

ANSWER: It comes down to your scenario rules. If different players have Tholians (Archaeo- or Neo-), you have to decide whether they are the same team or different teams that just happen to be working together. If they are considered different teams, even if they are working together under some kind of alliance, then they would have web on different frequencies.



Mike Kenyon asks: Rule (G10.552) says ships in a web can use a wild weasel. Rule (J2.131) then goes on to state that the maneuver rate must be four or less to use the wild weasel. Maneuver rate is not affected by a web. Can a ship going greater than four use a wild weasel when stuck in a web? It would seem that (G10.552) was designed as an enabling rule, but does not provide an explicit exemption.

ANSWER: Rule (G10.552) means that you can use a wild weasel while in a web, but, as you noted, maneuver rate is not affected by web. Therefore, if your ship is moving faster than Speed 4, it cannot use a wild weasel, even if held by the web.

David Zimdars asks: Suppose a ship which may breakdown is forced to do a high energy turn to avoid impacting a breakdown-strength web. The ship breaks down, tumbles, and strikes the web. Does it roll for breakdown again (at worse odds)? If it suffers a second breakdown during its first breakdown, is the period extended? Since it is tumbling, does it roll again? If on the second tumble roll, it does not tumble, does it stop? If not, when does the first tumbling stop?

ANSWER: Kommodore Ketrick replies: Tumbling stops when it hits the web (G10.591) and the fact that the ship was tumbling does not further increase the damage. The ship would roll for breakdown again (and if it did breakdown would suffer the damage effects of the breakdown), but would not roll for tumbling (as it cannot tumble in web). The roll for a breakdown would be worse because the previous breakdown reduced its breakdown rating. The period for recovery would count from the last breakdown, i.e., from the second breakdown if there were one, from the first if there were no second breakdown.

Matthew Potter asks: Can a Tholian ship with a web generator be a web spinner (G10.24)? Particularly, can a ship be laying web (moving away from an anchoring ship as it goes) and have the anchoring ship pay the energy cost?

ANSWER: It does not appear that (G10.24) enables ships to be web spinners in this manner. The ship would have to pay for any zero-strength web it creates.

MOVEMENT AND MANEUVER

Francois Lemay asks: A ship does a high energy turn and fails and ends up tumbling starting on Impulse #25. Can it perform self-destruction even if it is tumbling at the turn break?

ANSWER: By (C6.552), tumbling ships cannot take any action. This would block it from self-destructing.

Follow-up question: I had sent over three boarding parties in a capture attempt before the ship started to tumble; do we conduct boarding party combat at the end of the turn or is that not allowed as well as per (C6.552) for both sides?

ANSWER: In this case (C6.546) applies. Although the ship can take no action, one half of its surviving boarding parties will be able to defend the ship from one half of the surviving boarders. The remaining Marines (both attacker and defender) will be unavailable during the post-breakdown period or the Boarding Party Combat Step at the end of the turn the ship broke down.

Brendan Lally asks: As I understand it there is no rule allowing a ship to travel both forward and backward in the same turn. Does this still apply after a ship hits the tournament barrier (assuming the use of reserve power)? Does braking energy need to be applied on a subsequent turn after striking the barrier, before moving in reverse?

ANSWER: If you are using mid-turn speed changes, then ships can, indeed, mix forward and reverse movement in a turn. See (C12.37). As per rule (P17.221), hitting the tournament barrier does not release you from the restrictions of (C3.52) and (C12.371). If you try to reverse direction within eight impulses of hitting the tournament barrier, you will need to pay braking energy or attempt a quick reverse (C3.6).

Matthew Potter asks: A unit with a turn mode of 4 makes a turn. Four movements later, it kicks its speed up to a speed with a turn mode of 5. Would it be able to turn during the next move? Or would it have to satisfy the turn mode of 5?

ANSWER: Garth L. Getgen replies: See rule (C3.44) which states "A unit which satisfied its Turn Mode at its current speed but did not turn, and which subsequently changed speed [either by (C12.0) or at the end of a turn], must satisfy the Turn Mode at the new speed."

Follow-up Question: Rule (C3.44) seems to be the crux of the problem. Is it that the above unit must satisfy the higher turn mode even though the turn was performed at a lower turn mode?

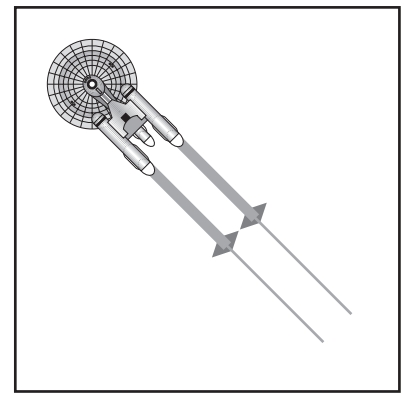
ANSWER: Alex Lyons replies: Rule (C3.44) is clear, the turn mode is determined at the moment of turning. The fact that it was satisfied earlier at a lower speed is not relevant.

Mike Kenyon adds: To apply what Alex said to your specific case: At Turn Mode 4, you accumulated four hexes of movement. You then accelerated and your turn mode is no longer satisfied. A common tactic is to take the top of your turn mode and plot a speed plot of that, then drop to one hex less than that, then speed back up to that. This enables you to always get a speed of the bottom of the next bracket up while maintaining a lower turn rate. For example: My Kzinti tournament command cruiser has a turn mode of C. That is a four at Speeds 15-20. If you plot a plot of: Speed 20 until Impulse #8, Speed 19 until Impulse #19, and Speed 20 thereafter, you end up getting 21 hexes of movement without ever having a turn mode of five. That is about the best you are going to do for cornering.

Xander Fulton asks: When a scenario starts, ships are given position and speed, which determines what they can accelerate to during Energy Allocation of Turn #1, but what of the turn and sideslip modes? Do ships start a scenario assuming they had previously been going "straight," so they can turn right away? Or do the turn and sideslip modes start at "0"?

ANSWER: Paul Pease replies: Rule (S1.2) . . . "Ships placed

on the map at the start of the scenario, or which enter the map during the scenario are assumed to have fulfilled their turn and sideslip modes provided it is possible for them to have done so. . ." There is an exception in that units at Speed Zero have not fulfilled either and scenarios may specify exceptions.



Sean Hunt asks:

The note at the end of (XC1.313-2) seems wrong, maybe. Would we not still use this rule for determining some aspects of movement, even if (XC1.32) plotted movement is being used? For instance, if a non-nimble X-ship was scheduled to move the same impulse as a nimble non-X ship, then presumably the X-ship would have to move before seeing the non-X ship's movement, even though it was pre-plotted.

ANSWER: Kommodore Ketrick replies: No, because by the definition of pre-plotted movement the nimble ship has given up its advantage in the Order of Precedence. It does not get to see all of the non-nimble ships that are using plotted movement move and then make its own movement based on that movement. So only the X-ships use non-plotted movement as stated.

Troy Williams asks: Is it legal to allocate energy to, say, a 14/28 speed plot but choose not to accelerate when the change is due (tactical situation changed) and remain at Speed 14 or conduct the change at a later impulse? I am pretty sure you cannot do this but cannot find the rule specifically saying this.

ANSWER: Kommodore Ketrick replies: Unplotted mid-turn decelerations are specifically forbidden. Note the following rule: (C12.32) DECELERATION (Second paragraph) specifically says: "Speed changes to reduce speed must always be plotted during Energy Allocation (C12.12). They can never be unplotted." Delaying an acceleration is by definition a deceleration. There is no legal means (in *Star Fleet Battles*; *Federation Commander* does provide a means to use power to cancel movement) to cancel (or delay) a plotted acceleration short of Emergency Deceleration or colliding with a tournament barrier, or Energy Balance Due to Damage, or breakdown as a result of a failed high energy turn, or impact with a web of sufficient strength at sufficient speed.

Other rules may also apply.

(C1.34) ALWAYS PLOTTED: (Second sentence of the second paragraph): "All deceleration must be plotted (including braking energy to reverse direction), except an emergency deceleration, which is never plotted."

(C12.22) PLOT REQUIRED (second sentence): "Alternatively, reserve warp power could be used to accelerate (but not to decelerate) the ship; see (C12.24)."

(C12.23) DAMAGE (this rule allows you to cancel an acceleration, but only if you are using Energy Balance due to Damage and in response to damage, not simply voluntarily for tactical convenience): "If Energy Balance Due to Damage (D22.0) is in use, a player can cancel or reduce future accelerations to fulfill energy balance requirements. Cancellations must be announced."

Rule (C12.244) allows for an unplotted deceleration, but only if it is following an unplotted acceleration in the middle of a turn, e.g., you use reserve power to accelerate to a faster speed between Impulse #8 and #16, the deceleration back to your plotted speed on Impulse #16 is technically an unplotted deceleration.

The rules do not allow you to cancel or delay a pre-plotted acceleration.

PROPOSALS BOARD

For this issue, Steven P. Petrick went through the BBS proposal topics looking for new ships. These didn't make the cut.

When You're in a Hurry

John Trauger proposed a hasty defense ship whose armaments were to be determined by a set BPV and die rolls against a table of weapons. The theory was that this ship was a hasty modification of an available hull, usually a freighter, created at a colony to fend off an attack.

This is not something you could do in a few days. It would require weeks and a shipyard to do even if all you were doing were installing a few phasers. Power leads would need to be run through the ship's hull requiring cutting through deck plates and the hull of the ship itself, not to mention installing the connections between the weapon mount and a control system to simply handle aiming the phaser. This is before you get into the question of what sorts of weapons systems are likely to be sitting around your typical colony waiting for the opportunity to be hastily installed on some random freighter. In the end this basically takes a WYN auxiliary cruiser, reduces the warp engines to standard freighter engines, then randomly rolls for the weapons in the option mounts. That's just not workable.

How Heavy Is My SCS?

Alan Trevor proposed a series of space control and stellar domination ships replacing the standard fighter squadrons with squadrons of heavy fighters.

A decision had already been made that heavy fighters and fast patrol ships are incompatible. No ship can simultaneously be a "heavy fighter carrier" and a "true PF tender." Heavy fighter carriers can operate "casual PFs" (maximum of two), but no true PF tender can operate heavy fighters. This ruling was incorporated into the tables that appeared in *Module G3A*.

Going Really Commando

Michael C. Grafton proposed that all empires built at least one commando ship that sacrificed some of its cargo, ground combat vehicles, and other capabilities in return for more firepower (and especially more transporters).

Currently, most commando ships pretty much stink at anything except toting their Marines around the galaxy. That is how they work. They are not intended to conduct planetary assault missions by themselves. They rely on other ships to "clear the way" before they enter the area near the planet and land the troops, allowing the commando ship to maximize the number of troops it carries to the objective. Reducing that is bad to start with.

Can you imagine attacking Tarawa without having the battle-ships shell the place and the carriers send in their fighters to bomb and strafe the place? You want to simply pull up to the atoll and send in *fewer* Marines from a ship with some guns and some planes (but not enough of either to matter).

This is not the way it is done. Commando ships are optimized to carry (lots and lots of) troops and, after the defender's guns are silenced and space superiority is achieved, to land the troops *en masse* to overwhelm one defended point at a time.

They are not intended to slug it out with planetary defense batteries or even with defending enemy ships, fighters, or PFs.

They have one job: get the troops to the surface. They do that after other ships do their jobs of reducing the enemy's space defenses. Done right, the only thing that should be bothering a commando ship are defense satellites that stayed hidden during the battle and become active when the ship lowers its shields and/or launches its shuttles to "land the Marines." The Romulans (and a few other ships) get around that by landing commando ships directly on the surface of the planet under attack. (Any

empire can do that with Free Troopers.)

If you have gained space superiority, it means you have absolute and overwhelming maneuver superiority on the planet's surface. This is because you can use your transporters (those on the commando ship and the ships supporting it) and shuttles (from the commando ship and the supporting ships) to quickly mass all of your troops against one defensive position at a time. The ships, with all the time in the world, gradually pick off any defending shuttles that try to move around. You do not have to attack every single ground combat location simultaneously (normally, special scenario rules can put time limit pressures on you), but can use all of your troops against each one, moving onto the next after you capture the last one.

As noted, a commando ship should not approach the planet (normally) until the defenses have been silenced, e.g., ground bases destroyed; enemy ships and all minor units like fighters, fast patrol ships, and skiffs destroyed or driven off. (Some enemy fighters and shuttles may have dispersed to remote areas to try to continue the fight and will have to be dealt with as they appear of course.) Doing so before this happens just lets the enemy concentrate on trying to shoot up your troop ship, so you do not hazard it in the battle until it is time for it to do its thing, i.e., you have secured space superiority.

When You Really Hate Andromedans

John Pepper proposed a series of more heavily armed ships to be used to fight the Andromedans before advanced technology completely supplanted non-X technology. The ships would be subject to shock due to the added heavy weapons, but this tradeoff was acceptable because they would be better able to penetrate Andromedan power absorber panels.

A series of "shock vulnerable" ships to fight the Andromedans is not a good idea. The ships would suffer shock breakdown and then be destroyed by the Andromedans or they would not fire the added weapons that will cause shock and be no better than the standard ships.

Scout Me an Escort, Please

John Wyszynski and Michael C. Grafton proposed variants of carrier escorts that included special sensors allowing the carrier group to have intrinsic scout capabilities rather than assigning a separate scout ship to support the carrier group.

Carrier escorts are supposed to escort carriers and be ready to use direct-fire weapons against plasma torpedoes and drones targeted on the carrier (priority #1), the fighters (priority #2), or the group as a whole (priority #3). Special sensors would replace weapons (reducing escort capabilities). They have some value versus drones, but little versus plasma torpedoes. They are also a significant drain on the ship's power systems if used to their full potential (lending electronic warfare) slowing the ship and thus the group as a whole. The primary mission is escort, so the sensors would detract from that mission and ultimately (if not blinded by the ship's non-drone weapons) make the group as a whole weaker. The mixed mission here is not effective or valid.

Armed Priority What?

Jeff Wile proposed that after the General War advanced technology (e.g., X-tech) would be proliferated to the many variants of the Armed Priority Transport for low intensity combat operations or other special missions (such as delivering fresh meat on the hoof to Kzinti X-squadrons).

Building a few APXs (and even a few FXXs) makes sense from the perspective that they can do the fast critical supply runs to support X-ships and X-squadrons (which is why they were in *Module X1*). Converting any of the other Armed Priority Transport variants is a waste of X-technology given their mission profiles. It would be like converting a monitor to X-technology instead of a heavy cruiser.

BACKGROUND QUESTIONS

THOSE CURIOUS ANDROMEDANS

Q: The background says that more than two Andromedan ships equipped with displacement devices cannot be in the same "region of space" but doesn't define a distance. How close can they get?

A: No one is sure, but at least a few dozen parsecs, at least, something larger than the WYN Cluster. There is simply no way a third ship is going to cruise into a scenario.

Q: Can only Andromedan ships with displacement devices use the RTN (Rapid Transit Network) to go Warp 15?

A: That is correct.

Q: Can Andromedan ships without displacement devices use the RTN at a slower speed?

A: No, they cannot use it at all, and would be limited to non-RTN strategic movement speeds, which are slower than non-Andromedan ships.

Q: How long does a given ship with a displacement device have to keep its displacement device turned off before another ship with a displacement device can arrive?

A: No one is sure, but it's more than enough time for plenty of defending reinforcements to show up.

Q: How were the Andromedans planning to conquer the WYN Star Cluster?

A: They rigged up two (some sources say more) motherships with no displacement devices, loaded them with energy modules, and included a base module. The plan was for the motherships to plow through the radiation zone like any other ship, then somehow survive the initial attack of the local WYN squadron. Having done so, they'd set up the base, and use it to link to the RTN and bring into the Cluster two Dominators full of combat satellite ships. With that force, and perhaps some more ships entering by normal transit, they could survive the mass attack by the entire WYN fleet. Once that happened, they could have used the RTN to bring in more ships and conquer the area.

Q: Can Romulan ships fly around cloaked and still locate an Andromedan RTN base?

A: Not unless they collide with it. Cloaking seriously limits your ability to find things that don't want to be found, and you need to be uncloaked to do this kind of survey work. The actual mechanics of this work are beyond the game system.

Q: Did the Galactic Powers use the RTN to get to the Magellanic Cloud?

A: Not really. They did follow the chain of bases (under normal movement rules) so they could destroy each base as they came to it and avoid having Andromedan ships appear behind them. Of course, they had to build their own bases at every step in order for their supply ships to catch up.

Q: Why did the Andromedans never upgrade their phaser-2s to phaser-1s? They already knew that those weapons were inferior after fighting the Magellanics with their laser technology.

A: The weapons are not phaser-2s, just something that has about that power curve. As such, there was no phaser-1 upgrade path for them to take.

Q: Why didn't the Andromedans finish wiping out the Magellanics before moving on to the Milky Way Galaxy? If they spent two centuries building a chain of bases to the Lesser Magellanic Cloud, what difference would a few years of further delay make?

A: They had reduced the Magellanics to a nuisance and had no reason to waste decades chasing down the last few holdouts. It's the 80/20 rule. They spent 20% of the effort required for total conquest and got 80% of the LMC's resources. It just wasn't necessary to spend four times as much effort getting the last 20% of the resources. It was cheaper to keep a few warships in the LMC and keep the Magellanic holdouts down to a low roar.

Q: We know that there was one intergalactic RTN connecting the Andromedan galaxy to the Lesser Magellanic Cloud, but why were there three starbases in the LMC to connect it to?

A: Starbases do more than serve as a connection to the intergalactic RTN. In any case, the IGRTN was connected to the first one in Y142. When that was destroyed in Y152, the Andromedans had already built the second starbase, and quickly connected it to the IGRTN (or had already done so for security and convenience). In either case, they did connect the third starbase to the IGRTN when it was built, again, for both security and convenience.

Q: What kind of ships did the empires use to supply the scouts looking for RTN bases?

A: Standard cargo ships were more than adequate. The survey ships were, after all, in well-traveled home space.

Q: Is there a second wave of ships on the way from the Andromedan home galaxy, with ships improved based on combat reports from this galaxy?

A: Nah, who told you *that*? Forget about it. No, really, just lay down until the nightmare goes away.

TECHNOLOGY

Q: If the Klingons managed to destroy Tholia, what would happen to the tiny artificial star inside? Would it go nova and destroy the Klingon fleet?

A: We're not sure. It might well fizzle out since the only thing allowing a star that small to burn is the pressure of the tractor beams inside the sphere. The Klingons attacking Tholia are in a lot of danger but not from a nova blast.

Q: I heard somewhere that Tholians can build bases faster than anyone else. Is this true?

A: No, it is not. This rumor started in comparing data from two *F&E* scenarios that had been done at different times by different authors. The discrepancy will be corrected in future products.

HISTORY

Q: Any chance we can get the alphabets and hull markings and such from the *Nexus Magazines* reprinted or posted on the website? Or are you saving some of it for *GPD* source books?

A: The alphabets in the old *Nexus* magazines came from the painting guides and those have been posted on the website for about 10 years.

Q: Kumerian commanded the Tholian border squadron in Y167 from the *D7C Darkslayer* but in Y170 was back in command of the old *D6 Destruction* as a captain. Why the reduction in rank?

A: The Klingons send ships from all of their fleets to the Tholian border for combat experience. Kumerian was sent there with the *Destruction*. At one point, he was the senior officer present and was temporarily named a commodore and took command of the *Darkslayer*. After an unfortunate incident that went badly, his "temporary promotion" was quietly forgotten and he was sent back to the Eastern Fleet in his original ship. Later, the *Destruction* was taken over by a mutiny and Kumerian was temporarily sent to a penal frigate but redeemed his reputation and went back to the fleet. Because no one would give him another command, he spent a couple of years in the Marines, then was sent to the staff of the Red Fleet (which was a training organization). He remained there for many years, eventually rising to command that unit.

Q: What were the Trade Wars?

A: A series of conflicts after the Andromedan War ended. No significant data has been published as of this date.

Q: Is there, anywhere, a complete detailed timeline of the *Star Fleet Universe*?

A: Certainly. It's on the website. Check the Master Index under "Timeline" and you'll find a link to it.

STAR FLEET VENUES

STAR FLEET WARLORD

General News

The new Star Fleet Warlord Aide has been released. It is 0.9.4 There are many improvements that have been made since the initial release of the original Warlord Aide. Some of those improvements were better recognition of the various orders, fixing the issue with ships that have four character designations, and adding additional checks for certain orders. There are still improvements to be made in the next version.

One of the things I would like to improve on is the keyboard interface. The old Aide was easier to use when entering ship movement orders. Also I would like to be able to change the Aide to allow you to submit the orders directly to the website and possibly also download the latest turn from the website.

Games In Progress

Die Hard 30: This game has completed 26 turns with the following corporations being the the top three stocks: Trinity, Cloudmasters, and Inglorious Tribbles.

Die Hard 31: This game just started with only 14 turns completed. The following corporations are the most powerful at the moment: Gungho Iguana, Crom's Army, and Allocosa Brasiliensi.

Die Hard 32: This game just started with only two turns completed. It has 16 players in it.

Game 86: This game is over. It was won by Arthur De Laura, 2nd place going to John Haugh, and 3rd to Andrew Campbell

Game 87: This game is over. Since the game was down to two players, they decided it was better accept a tie and open another slot for a new game to be played.



Battlestations Star Fleet

This project has been delayed far too long, and for all the wrong reasons, but we can at this time see a path to publication. We have finally received what seems to be a publishable draft of the rules. (It looks good so far.) This sounds very much like a future Kickstarter project, given the high production cost and values, but that is where ADB, Inc. needs to go in the future. Watch the BBS for news about this project.



by Paul Franz

General News

SFB Online has been a service for many years now. The original idea was to allow *Star Fleet Battles* players to be able to practice for the Origins Gold Hat Tournament.

The initial program was written in Visual Basic (it only ran on Windows) and had the number of each system in a box with a text label beside it, with no graphic interface. The only things that were fairly graphical were the board and the counters.

Now the client is written in Java so it can be run on any platform that supports Java (Windows, Mac OS X, FreeBSD, and of course any distribution of Linux). It supports so much more, including fighters, PFs, monsters, non-tournament ships, ECPs, any kind of drone, and so much more. In addition to supporting *SFB* quite well, you can play *Federation Commander* as well.

That is great now, but what about the future? There is plenty room for expansion. If you have listened to the *Star Fleet Universe* On Call podcast you would have heard about many things that I want to do in the future. Some of those things are adding support for a Mumble server so people will be able to talk while playing, adding support for *Starmada*, completing the *Federation & Empire* plugin, and integrating the NetKill ranking. Also, I plan on completing a mobile app so people can login and chat anytime with people that are online.

Client News

The most visible part of the services offered by *SFB Online* is the client. Some of the latest additions are: fixed pre-loading fighters, re-did the definition tool for Next Generation of SSDs.

We have a few volunteers helping on switching out the old ship definitions with the new improved ones over the next couple months. Steve Cole is working with us to move this forward.

Tournament News

Rated Ace tournament RA12Q1 is over. It was judged by Peter Bakija. The winner was Jason Gray in the Gorn TCC.

Platinum Hat 2012 is being judged by Peter Bakija. It is at the semi-final round with Paul Scott in the WYN GBS (BB) vs. Ken Lin in the ISC TCC. Bill Schoeller was defeated in the Semi-final round by Gregg Dieckhaus's Romulan TFH.

Rated Ace tournament RA12Q2 is over. It was judged by Paul Scott. The winner was Geof Clark in the Romulan TKR.

World League 2012 Tournament was run by Peter Bakija. It was won by Team Alien Demon Battalion. That is right Team ADB. The players were: Clayton Krueger (TKR), Bill Schoeller (KLI) and John Taylor (GBS bb).

Campaign News

Empire at War is going well with the Y171 Winter turn almost done. We are waiting on a battle between the Hydrans and the LDR. It is run by Frank Lemay.



Planetary Survey: Skoleos

Status: Federation Associate Member.
 Location: Coordinates 3704, United Federation of Planets.
 Density: 5.5.
 Diameter: 6,438 miles.
 Class: M.
 Land Area as Percentage of Surface: 28%.
 Surface Gravity: 0.81G.
 Mean Surface Temperature: 72° F.
 Surface Pressure at Sea Level: 0.96.
 Atmosphere Composition: Nitrogen: 77%.
 Oxygen: 21%.
 Argon: 1%.
 Trace Gases: 1%.
 Pollution: Moderate.
 Orbital Distance: 93 million miles (1.00 AU).
 Day: 25 hours.
 Year: 357 local days (372 Earth days, 1.02 Earth years).
 Axial Tilt: 15°.
 Population: 5 billion.
 Star Class: G3V yellow dwarf (0.97 stellar mass).
 M3V red dwarf companion at 47 AU (0.30 stellar mass).

The Skolean star system is a binary, with six planets (one class I, three class G (two of which are mined for minerals), one class M (Skoleos), and one large Class-A hot gas giant around the main star. The red dwarf companion has three class B gas giant planets. Asteroids and moons throughout the system are mined for minerals.

II. BIOSPHERE

The third planet in the system, Skoelos is typical Class M, with moving tectonic plates, a molten core, a standard magnetic field, and two small moons. There are four main continents and numerous islands.

PROFILE

A Federation Associate Member species, Skoleans resemble Terran chameleons in both appearance and special abilities. While they rarely exceed five feet in height and are not particularly strong, their lean and wiry build allows them to react quickly with a high level of hand-eye coordination.

Warm-blooded reptiles, Skoleans are very friendly with the Gorns but are not related to them biologically, having evolved independently on their home world. They use male/female sexual reproduction, although they lay eggs rather than give live birth as most mammals do. Skoleans reach adulthood around age 14, and live 60-70 years with proper medical care.

III. HISTORY OF THE SKOLEANS

The Skoleans first emerged in recognizably modern form about 200,000 years ago. They were not the only sentient species to develop on their planet: a species of proto-humanoids descended from tree-dwelling mammals emerged about the same time. The two species co-existed for about 150,000 years, neither of them getting out of the Stone Age. However, about 50,000 years ago, the mammals disappeared from the fossil record. What

happened to them is a major mystery. Were they wiped out by war with the Skoleans? Did they succumb to disease or climate change? Were they taken off and seeded on some other world by powerful aliens? No one is sure.

The Skoleans developed the rudiments of civilization about 15,000 years ago, beginning the slow march up the ladder towards technological industrialization. There were wars and infighting: savage conflicts over resources, religion, and culture. As with most sentient species, the Skoleans eventually reached the point where they had to cooperate and unify, or destroy themselves. When the Federation starship *Exeter* made First Contact in Y153, the Skoleans had developed a semblance of planetary unity and were about to launch their first warp drive vessel.

The Skoleans adapted quickly to modern technology, proving to be very adept students of science, as well as skilled pilots. The Skoleans applied for Federation membership in Y158, and individuals began serving in small numbers in Star Fleet the following year.

As relations between the Federation and the Gorns gradually warmed in the Y160s, the Skoleans discovered a great kinship with their larger fellow reptiles. Skolean mercenaries from the warrior classes began serving in the Gorn military, in far larger numbers than they served in Star Fleet. When the Gorns adopted fighter technology, they found it easier to purchase Federation fighters and recruit Skolean pilots to fly them, than build large fighters suited for the bulk of a Gorn pilot.

Federation citizens serving in the Gorn military gave some legal complications, but both sides decided to simply ignore the issue. This was similar to American pilots serving in the RAF in the early stages of the Second World War, or the Nepalese Gurkhas serving in the British and Indian Armies.

IV. CULTURE OF THE SKOLEANS

Government: The Skolean government is a parliamentary democracy, which required little adjustment to bring it in line with Federation standards. The Skoleans maintain friendly relations with other Federation member planets, but they are best friends with the Gorns. The Skolean National Guard operates only a tiny number of small ships and converted freighters for local defense, but boasts huge numbers of fighters and bombers based on Skoleos and outlying colonies, including some bombers of Gorn design. A heavy Andromedan attack on the system in Y194 was beaten back, albeit with heavy losses.

Society: Open and diverse, typical for the Federation. In some ways, Skolean culture is more open than Gorn culture, which still had significant social conflict between the Brown, Gray, and Green Scale ethnicities as recently as Y120. The Gorns were intrigued with how well the Skoleans had managed their own ethnic differences.

Economy: Typical Federation. During the General War years, the Skoleans actually did more trading with the Gorns than with the rest of the Federation, especially after a reduction in tariff barriers following the Gorn entry into the war in Y174.

Laws: The Skolean legal system is similar enough to the Federation that it required few changes upon gaining membership. Every sentient being on the planet is equal under the law.

Religion: About 20% of Skoleans are atheistic or agnostic. The remaining 80% are divided between two major religions. One religion posits the existence of a monotheistic creator God similar to Yahweh or Allah. The second is a polytheistic religion with pantheist tendencies, similar to Hinduism. There are a few various smaller sects and cults, and some Skoleans have converted to the dominant Gorn religions.



CONQUEST NOTES

2xF-Ss ARE BETTER THAN 1xF-L . . . EXCEPT

— Ensign Jean Sexton, *USS North Carolina*

Usually experienced players will advise you to build two small freighters (F-S) rather than one large freighter (F-L). After all, the two small ones can do exactly the same job as the large one, but cost 52 economic points rather than 61. As long as you have the building slots to do that, it is indeed a wise choice.

That is true, unless you want to convert them to suicide freighters and do it quickly. You are allowed one conversion of a Merchant Marine ship each turn (two if you have researched an increased rate of conversions of those ships). If you can only convert one F-S, then your ship's basic point value is 50. Converting an F-L to an F-SL increases the basic point value to 100. Since you can convert one a turn (or two) then you are faced with 50 (or 100) versus 100 (or 200).

When you start the game, you are usually allocated 2xF-Ls and 4xF-Ss per trade route hex. Consider converting your F-Ls from that pool first and replacing them with 2xF-Ss. Then your increased basic point value is 100 per 52 economic points spent. Only when you use up the original base of ships do you need to consider building a batch of F-Ls in a starbase, sector base, or shipyard.

This advice flies out the window if you have no real need to increase your Merchant Marine's overall basic point value quickly and there are no "free" F-Ls to convert. Then you get the most bang for your buck by spending 26 economic points to get an F-S and converting it to an F-SS for a 50 basic point value as shown by the math below. If you are building an F-L to F-SL conversion, you are spending 61 economic points to get 7.5 economic points added to your Merchant Marine's budget ($100 \cdot 0.75$). If you build one F-S to F-SS conversion, then you are spending 26 economic points to get 3.75 economic points ($50 \cdot 0.75$). That is 0.12 economic points gained per economic point spent in the first case and 0.14 economic points gained per economic point spent in the latter case. So if time is on your side or if you are close to the Merchant Marine income cap (E1.15), then building the smaller freighters might be a better choice for you.

However, most empires could use the increase sooner than later, so converting F-Ls should still be considered.

Rated the best Conquest Note in this issue.

MINERAL RESOURCE RULE 101

— Senior Lieutenant John Stiff, *USS Virginia*

Okay, so you want to create a minor or major system via Mineral Resource Run (MRR). Since you need to build the survey cruiser to do this, you may as well build a computer-operated survey cruiser.

Three survey cruisers produce 1.5% (or $3 \times .5\%$) toward the empire's economy per turn. As the computer-operated survey cruiser is considered to have an outstanding crew, the benefit is increased by 50%. Three computer-operated survey cruisers produce 2.25% per turn.

One could create the outstanding crew survey cruiser via training. However this is done after ship construction has been completed and is dependent on a die role for the cost. The computer-operated survey cruiser is ready to go once the ship leaves the shipyard.

BETTER GROUND DEFENSES

— Lieutenant JG Howard Bampton, *USS Maryland*

Typically an empire that invests in ground defenses at their systems will place a mixture of ground-based defense phaser-4s (for crunch power), ground warning stations (for the special sensors), and fighter bases. In the mid-game when you have the ability to build heavy bombers, you can exchange the ground warning stations and fighter bases for heavy bomber bases. You will get the special sensors for "free," which will allow you to use those freed ground base slots for something else.

BIGGER IS NOT ALWAYS BETTER

— Commander John Berg, *USS Illinois*

In *Galactic Conquest*, the combat system penalizes large unsupported units. In an even engagement against a single star base and an enemy fleet, the enemy fleet will always win. Since the enemy fleet never has to divide its combat rolls to damage the enemy, every attack is like a directed damage attack, without dividing the damage by two, so it is really doing double damage!

This is of course because there is only a single target and the damage does not have to be distributed between several options. Further, the single target will degrade faster (crippled, etc.) in combat than the enemy fleet and it cannot even be placed into reserve!

To ensure better odds, never have units alone, unsupported. There are reasons that *Star Fleet Battles* has many supporting units with big ships/bases. Starbases have fighters, defense ships, and fast patrol ships. Large battleships are never found alone but with fighters and support ships. In *Galactic Conquest* never build lone unsupported bases or ships.

ECONOMICS IS KEY

— Ensign John B. Steele, *USS Indiana*

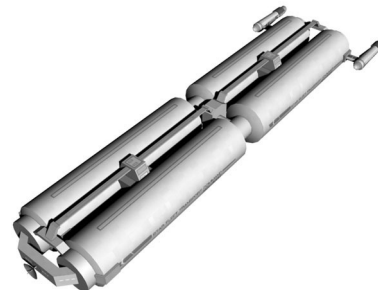
As the emperor of your empire you must always think economics. Without a good economy you cannot fill your shipyards for your fleet or get that fancy new hand phaser for your Marines. Concentrate your efforts always on expanding your economic capabilities first and then building your shipyards, warships, and technologies. Economy first!

IT IS ALL ABOUT REACTIONARY MOVEMENT

— Cadet Charles Coleman, *USS South Carolina*

If you are defending and you are outnumbered, what do you do? Do you have an outstanding crewed ship? If so, plant it one hex behind your defended system (two hexes if you have enhanced special sensors). Outstanding crewed ships have a movement rate of 4 when by themselves (or with other outstanding crewed ships). On Segment 3 have them move away from the defended system. This action lights up the hex your defending units are in. On Segment 4 you can activate your reactionary movement, be it Assembling Movement (AM), Warp Sling (WS), or whatever nasty trick you have up your sleeve. When your enemy enters the hex on Segment 4, you attack *en masse*.

Result = a very battered and beaten attacking enemy force.



PLAY STAR FLEET BATTLES BY EMAIL

In recent years, the PBEM system has mostly been used for multi-player fleet games, but it was originally written for two players and was in fact designed for tournaments. While SFBOL has taken over as the two-player non-face-to-face system of choice, the PBEM system is still available for your *SFB* needs.

That being said...

There is currently a feeling of peace and quiet in the PBEM world. While there are a couple duels going on, there is not a lot of activity. This situation, however, is not acceptable. No sir. Not even a little. In fact, it makes one sad. It cannot be allowed continue.

The holidays are over. The new year has begun. By now you should have had plenty of time to shine the photon tubes, regrease the drone launchers, and fix that pesky intermittent targeting issue with the starboard aft phaser-3.

Go out to the BBS and propose a game. Right now. Do not even finish reading this article. Get some discussions going. Let's get some games going and work off all of the rich food you ate over the holidays.

Ok, ok. Playing a PBEM game will probably not work off any rich food. It might help you forget about it though.

Request for Information

One part of the PBEM website has links to PBEM games that are either being played or have completed. There is also a section for games in Limbo, which are games that either don't have a web page or never reported being completed. If you have any information about any of these games (or active games that have finished), please let me know. I'm not trying to take charge of your game, I just want to keep the information on the website accurate. Any information would be helpful and appreciated.



This product proved to be so popular (based only on some vague press releases and photos of the playtest set) that we have decided it needs to be our first "real commercial production" product in a proper box with proper parts. That means printing it overseas and therein lies the challenge. We have never done that and frankly had no idea how to do it.

So we asked a few friends who have done it before, got a lot of advice and a few scary stories, and began contacting foreign printers. That hasn't been all that productive (yet) as we keep trying to get answers to questions that the Chinese, Indian, and Indonesian printers apparently don't understand why we're asking in the first place.

We will tame this beast and take the company in this direction. We want to be doing more commercial boxed games that reach 10 times the audience of the hardcore product line we have been offering for the last 14 years. It's going to be a battle, but victory shall be ours (and yours) in the end.

WHAT DOES JEAN MEAN TO ADB, Inc.?

When Jean Sexton finally joins our full-time staff it will mean big changes for ADB, Inc. Some things we haven't been doing will start getting done, and other things will just work better with her helping to pull the company forward.

MARKETING

This is probably the most neglected job at ADB. If Jean does nothing else, she can make sure we get product notices to wholesalers in a more timely manner. This is an involved process that starts with project planning and continues all the way through production. She has to be sure that the cover art is done far enough ahead so it can be used in wholesaler product catalogs.

Jean needs to make sure that "Marketing Monday" doesn't get skipped three weeks out of every four.

Gaming discussion websites need regular communication from ADB, Inc., not random bolts from the blue.

We need to always have a project on Kickstarter, and that's just not possible without someone like Jean to manage these projects in real time.

Jean can take over the Ranger program, which is so far down SVC's to-do list that it gets no attention. She needs to link this to stores and conventions that want a demo.

She can hunt down game reviewers and keep track of which ones actually did the review, get our products into convention game libraries, promote the Ambassador program (which right now gets almost no attention), and contact gaming stores directly and see what they want from us.

Jean wants to run some ads on Facebook and place more banner ads on game discussion websites.

ROLEPLAYING

Jean needs to be an RPG Line Editor in deed as well as title. The company needs to print at least four RPG books a year, not just one, or rarely two. *Traveller* needs to get done, other systems (such as *Savage Worlds* or whatever is hot a year from now) added, and the *Final Frontier* magazine and an online *PD* newsletter started. There is no end to the available systems and ideas; she could even do *Steampunk SFU*.

She wants to update the *GURPS PD* main rulebook. There are, she thinks, some issues with it.

GENERALLY HELPING OUT

Jean can make sure we send something to e23 every week. Right now, that's an extra job for Leanna who is busy and doesn't always get that far down her list. Jean can make sure that the assembly line is regularly producing stuff for e23.

We're implementing a new priority work schedule, which Jean will be part of. The daily quota for "pages done" must be met. No, her work on Facebook doesn't count for the quota. That's playtime for her, not work.

Jean will certainly continue her proofreading duties. As she learns more and more about each game system, she notices mistakes other than typos, improving every product. She has proven (during trips to Amarillo) that she can get three times as many pages read in a day as "nights and weekends" allow.

Jean wants to enforce "every other Wednesday game night" including Leanna to see what other game companies are publishing. (*Tribbles* came from such a game night.) Jean wants to sit down with the Board once a month when the new Game Trade Magazine arrives to review what other publishers are doing.

Jean will be available to look into "new ideas" that we hear about but do not have time to pursue.

And finally, Jean wants to remind us all to try to think young and find out what our current and future customers are playing. She wants "four pages of rules and some toys" to be our new product line, not a greeting card slogan.

STAR FLEET BATTLE FORCE

Here we present six new special cards for *Star Fleet Battle Force*. Each provides a unique change to the overall game.

Three of these cards are marked “play immediately” which is a concept we have previously avoided in *Star Fleet Battle Force* because there is no way to enforce honesty. A player who drew the card and didn't want to play it could simply hide it. So, if one of those situations happens when everybody has to discard all of their cards, all are discarded face up. If you are caught with a

“play immediately” card in your hand or reserve, then every player in the game (starting with the player to your left) may take one of your ships and add it to his fleet (repairing all damage for free when he takes the ship) or add it to his “kill pile” if he would rather do that. So be honest and don't get caught!

Merchant Shipyard provides a way to repair a few vital systems on a key ship.

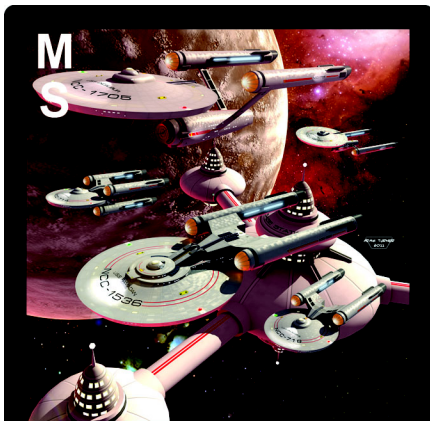
Retribution might be described as the last great act of defiance, and reflects the explosion rules from *SFB*.

Sun Snake is another monster.

Anti-Drone permanently adds an icon to one ship. A damage point applied to the icon means you must discard the card.

Double Team is a new idea, and allows two ships to use the same attack card (in effect, it doubles the attack card).

The Black Hole not only damages every ship, but reduces damage on everybody's next turn.



M
S

MERCHANT SHIPYARD

Play immediately in the center of the table. In addition to your normal turn all players can discard up to three cards to repair that many damage points on one ship. This card is then removed.



R
E
T

RETRIBUTION

Play when one of your ships is destroyed. Cause D6 damage to the attacking ship. The attacking ship cannot use defensive cards for the next turn.

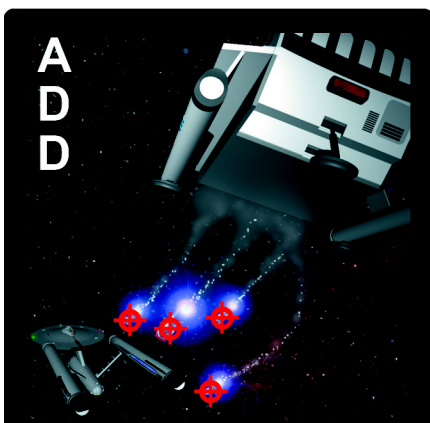
“Set the reactor to overload, if we're going down then we're taking them with us.”
Captain Joel “Iron Cloak” Shutts



S
S

SUN SNAKE

Play immediately in the center of the table. Destroyed if it receives 24 damage. If it is not destroyed by the third player to attack it, it destroys one cruiser belonging to each player. If you do not have a cruiser in play then you do not lose a ship.



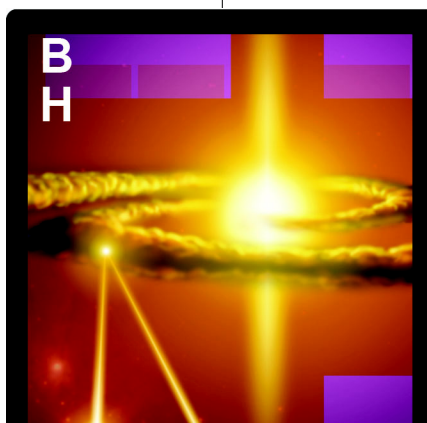
A
D
D

ANTI-DRONE DEVICE

Play at any time on one of your ships.



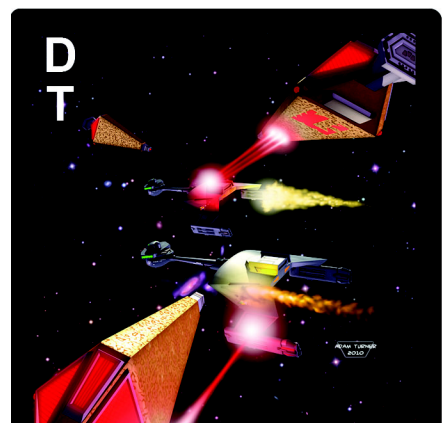
Add the ADD symbol to that ship. When this ship is in the screen remove 3 damage points from drone cards used by any player against that ship.



B
H

BLACK HOLE

Play immediately in the center of the table. In addition to your normal turn all ships immediately receive three damage points. Any ship destroyed by this card is not returned to the shipyard deck or added to victory points. All ships gain a two EW point defense bonus. Remove before the playing player's next turn



D
T

DOUBLE TEAM

Play when you declare an attack. Choose a second ship to join in the attack and both ships use the same attack cards as much as they can.



STAR FLEET MARINES



ASSAULT NOTES

KEEP THE THREAT THERE

— Captain Steven Paul Petrick, *USS Texas*

When conducting an operation where you are supported by shuttles, try to keep at least one shuttle available with two squads aboard. This will force your opponent to take into account the niggling little detail that if he uses all of his opportunity fire, the shuttle can sweep past his lines and deposit the squads where they can hamper his movement, attack a vulnerable asset, block his retreat, or delay his reinforcements. This threat may keep him from taking opportunity fire shots at your advancing forces, allowing them to get into position to rout his defenders with massed fires.

Rated the best Assault Note of this issue of Captain's Log.

ADJUST FOR ALTITUDE

— Senior Lieutenant William Wilson, *USS Colorado*

The altitude at which your shuttles operate can affect their combat effectiveness. Shuttles at low altitude have a fairly long weapons range, and can be hit from long range. Shuttles at high altitude, on the other hand, have a short effective range (since they use much of their range just to reach the ground).

Going from hover mode to flight mode greatly increases the range at which your shuttle can fire or be fired upon, but once in flight mode, every additional level of altitude actually decreases the maximum range.

Therefore, set your altitude based on the number of targets you need to simultaneously keep in range. Since you can only fire at one target per turn, you want that to be as few as possible, unless you think some of them may be killed or move out of range before you have a chance to fire. Usually, if you are in aerial mode at all, you may as well go as high as you can.

Fighters dropping cluster bombs should operate at Altitude 10. To drop a cluster bomb in a hex, you need to pass over it during your Movement Phase. Remaining at Altitude 10 means that the maximum range at which you can be attacked by ground units is five. Since fighters move Speed 15, at Altitude 10 you can begin movement out of range of the target, fly over it, drop your bombs, and continue past to the other side without exposing yourself to any return fire.

FOCUS ON THE CHOKE POINTS

— Senior Lieutenant Xander Fulton, *USS Oregon*

When expecting what seems like an overwhelming enemy assault, it can sometimes feel challenging in knowing where to start with a defense. Knowing the terrain you need to defend, however, can help guide or at least inform your decision. For example, missions that involve enemy forces with wheeled or tracked vehicles in map tiles A or D advancing on defended locations in the other map tiles will need to cross one of the two bridges (hex 1412 or 1329) to advance. Planning defenses around avenues of advance the enemy must use, and knowing which avenues of advance they will likely use can help provide a starting point for planning your deployment.

Additionally, this can be helpful in determining where to establish fire patterns to set up (L5.43) "beaten zones." As the rules note, judicious use of "beaten zones" can allow a much smaller defensive force to hold their own against a larger attacking force, but it requires the enemy to obligingly keep moving units into it. They will not do this if it can be avoided, so make sure to take the

opportunity fire shots to create the "beaten zones" in hexes where they will be hard to avoid: on bridges, at crossroads, etc. Target the locations the enemy will have little choice but to move through!

Note that the terrain must be defined as an obstacle. If the "rivers" are defined as "streams" in the scenario, they are not true obstacles to any movement. They will impose a movement delay but will not force the enemy to use the bridges to cross them. It is important to know how the terrain is being defined.

VERTICAL ENVELOPMENT WITH TRANSPORTERS

— Captain Terry O'Carroll, *HMAS New South Wales*

When conducting an assault, use transporters to beam infantry squads behind the enemy where they will have line-of-sight to hexes the enemy units must move through to escape. Your transported units will flip right-side-up at the end of your turn, making them eligible to fire snap-shots or call for indirect fire at retreating enemy units on the opponent's turn.

LAST STAND

Star Fleet Marines: Last Stand is the next product on the schedule after the massive January release package, and is scheduled for February. The counters are printed, the rules are well in hand, and work is now focusing on the scenarios (which define the map).

We have created our own twist on history by having historical events inspire scenarios for *Last Stand*. The largest scenario is based (loosely) on the battle at Dien Bien Phu. As the French fortress in the far "outback" of Vietnam was actually a string of smaller forts connected by a road, we'll base the overall map on that idea, placing three areas (each just swell for a valiant defense against bitter hand-to-hand fighting) along the central road. Each of the three key defense bastions on the map will then be the centerpiece for other scenarios.

One example is Hornet's Nest (based on the Battle of Shiloh), where a brigade of troops in a patch of woods held up the advance of an entire field Army (trying to cross open fields) long enough for other troops to get their act together, get reinforced, and dig in. (The fact that one of Stephen V. Cole's ancestors was wounded at the Hornet's Nest just adds to the fun. If you get a die roll of "2" against the key unit, the game designer might never have been born!)

The central town will be arranged to provide the basis for an Alamo scenario, where Federation colonists are trying to hold out against Gorn assault troops (who mistook the Federation civilians for a Romulan ground legion). The town can also be used for a scenario in which a German unit (in San Lorent) held up the Normandy invasion by a day, and it would also be great for a scenario in which Romulan troops hold out against a Dionaen siege in a scenario based on the relief of Lucknow.

One of the three defense bastions will be a hill mass suitable for use in a scenario inspired by Monte Casino.

The product of course has more than just a few scenarios ripped from the pages of some random history book.

We will publish the outpost and external passenger rules that didn't make it into *Star Fleet Marines: Assault*. We're working on the rules for the attack on a small ground base but won't promise those will be playested in time for this module.

New units will be provided, beyond the promised ground weapons vehicles with their indirect-fire capability. Most of these are shuttles (ground assault shuttles, ground bombardment shuttles, heavy transport shuttles, and heavy assault shuttles).

Counters will added to the mix for the Hydrans and Kzintis, and we will flesh out the Romulans into a full set equal to what the Federation and Klingons got in *Star Fleet Marines: Assault*.

There are more surprises to be had, and more new ideas are being assembled for a third module.

STARMADA

Battleships Armada

The new year brings exciting news: the much-anticipated introduction of battleships to the *Starmada* game system! *Battleships Armada* will contain the “Big Boys” from most of the existing Empires (Federation, Klingon, Romulan, Kzinti, Gorn, Tholian, Seltoran) as well as tactical transports, tugs, and dozens of additional ships. Toss in a handful of optional rules, a scenario design system, along with a few space monsters and you’ve got the recipe for even more space-based mayhem.

This issue of *Captain’s Log* provides a quick preview of some of the things you just might see in *Battleships Armada*, including the optional rules presented below and ship cards for two battleships at the end of the book. As an added bonus, these two battleships are also given in *Admiralty Edition* format! (We will release both Nova and Admiralty versions of *Battleship Armada*.)

Astute players will have noticed the *Admiralty* battleships have a forward shield rating of 7, which is higher than otherwise allowed. To account for this, make note of the “Minimum/Maximum Rolls” rule from p.23 of the *Admiralty Core Rulebook*.

EXAMPLE: A Federation Battleship is attacked from the front by a Klingon D7 battlecruiser. The D7 fires its four disruptors, hitting with two. A total of four impact dice are rolled (1, 2, 3, and 6). Normally, none of these would be enough to penetrate the BB’s forward shield (7). However, using the “Minimum/Maximum Rolls” rule, the die that came up 6 is rerolled; if this result is 5 or 6, the impact die will penetrate the shields and cause damage.

Penetrating Damage (Optional Rule)

In the standard game of *Klingon Armada*, the enemy must eliminate all of a ship’s shield boxes before any “real” damage can be inflicted. This rule can be used to increase the chances of scoring hull damage earlier in the battle.

Each time a ship is required to check off a shield box, roll one die: if the result is 1, check off a hull box instead.

EXAMPLE: A Klingon C8 *Admiral Kang*-class dreadnought has three shield boxes remaining. It suffers three points of damage from a Federation photon torpedo spread. Normally, this would result in the loss of all remaining shields, but no hull damage. However, using this optional rule, three dice are rolled, coming up 1, 3, and 4. As a result, one hull box and two shields are checked off, leaving one shield box.

Damage Allocation (Optional Rule) – BETA TEST

As with all beta test rules, we encourage you to give us your feedback. Please visit the *Starmada* discussion forum at <http://mj12games/starmada/forum>.

One of the major changes in the *Nova Edition* from previous versions of *Starmada* is the nature of damage resolution. While there is still some randomness in the system, other aspects are deterministic: for example, a ship with nine hull boxes will never lose any systems until at least three boxes have been checked off. This optional rule allows players to change that, albeit at the expense of a bit more record-keeping.

The first step is to determine the ship’s damage factor. This is done by multiplying the ship’s hull size by 29% and rounding to the nearest integer. If the ship has fragile systems, multiply by 17% instead; if the ship has reinforced systems, multiply by 67%. Record this value in some convenient spot on the ship display. The game is played normally, with the following exception:

Do not perform damage checks as described on page 14 of the *Starmada Nova Rulebook*. Instead, each time a ship checks off a hull box, roll one die and consult the following chart. The results are added to a running total for each of the four damage

types. Whenever this total reaches a multiple of the ship’s damage factor (as determined above), check off one of the appropriate damage boxes or shield dice icons.

Roll	Thr	Wpn	ECM	Shields
1	1	3	0	0
2	2	0	2	0
3	3	0	0	1
4	0	1	3	0
5	0	2	0	2
6	0	0	1	3

EXAMPLE 1: A Federation *Arab Legion*-class heavy war destroyer has 12 hull boxes. This means it has a damage factor of 4 ($14 \times 0.29 = 4.06$). During the first couple of turns, all of the damage to the HDW has been absorbed by its shields; however during Turn #3, it checks off two hull boxes. Two dice are rolled, coming up 3 and 5. As a result, the ship’s Thrust running total is 3 (3 + 0), while its Weapons running total is 2 (0 + 2). The ECM and Shields results are ignored, as they play no part in *Starmada* games in the *Star Fleet Universe*. When it next takes a hull hit, any roll of 1-3 will cause the ship to lose its first thrust damage box, since its running total will reach 4. Likewise, if the next roll is 1 or 5, the ship will lose its first weapons damage box.

EXAMPLE 2: A Romulan *Royal Hawk*-class cruiser has a hull size of 17. Normally, this would mean a damage factor of 5; however, because the ship has fragile systems, the damage factor is 3 ($17 \times 0.17 = 2.89$). The ship suffers three hull hits, and three dice are rolled (1, 1, and 3). This yields running totals of Thrust 5 (1 + 1 + 3) and Weapons 6 (3 + 3 + 0). As a result, one thrust damage box and two weapons damage boxes are checked off.

As in the standard game, a maximum of four boxes/icons can be checked off of each grouping; *i.e.* you should never check off the last thrust, weapon, ECM, or shield box.

Damage to ship systems is always resolved as described on p.15 of the *Starmada Nova Rulebook*.

If using the Bank-Specific Damage advanced rule, do not track Weapons damage as above; instead, conduct damage checks as described on page 26 of the *Starmada Nova Rulebook*.



Starfleet Command is the computer game that refuses to die, or rather, the players refuse to allow it to die. While the publisher is long gone, no end of websites provide support, online play realms, new ships (and new images for existing ships), help with the game, and tactical advice. We have created a special page on our website where players can find these links listed.

<http://www.starfleetgames.com/Star%20Fleet%20Command.shtml>

The “official” *SFC* site is dynaverse.net, with an on-line play realm, ships, campaigns, rule modifications, discussions, and more. They are working on plans to build their own version of the never-published *Starfleet Command 4*. They run a database here: xenocorp.net/Fleets_Guilds/Starfleet_Command/starfleet_Command.html

There are other websites out there that keep this phenomenal game going strong, and if you come across one, let us know so we can list it on our website support page for this great game.

A CALL TO ARMS CALL-OUT NOTES

TARGET THAT EXPLOSION . . . NO, THAT ONE . . . NO . . .

— Lieutenant Commander Tony L. Thomas, *USS Tennessee*

In most wargames the tendency is to take out the biggest, baddest guy around first. After all, once the champion is slain everyone else is easy pickings, right?

This is not always the case in *A Call To Arms: Star Fleet*. Let's look at an opposing fleet consisting of a dreadnought, three heavy cruisers, three light cruisers, and three frigates. This comes in at right around 1,500 points (depending on which empire and which variants are selected) and makes for a typical one-evening battle (or four days of *SFB*, you pick). You lose the initiative roll so your opponent fires every weapon his dreadnought has. Now it is your turn. You survived the fiery onslaught dished out by the dreadnought and you are determined to make your opponent pay for his temerity and take out *his* dreadnought.

Wait a minute there!

The dreadnought has already fired its weapons and is not a threat during the rest of *this* turn. Is it worth more to take out a target that has already fired or to try to prevent some additional incoming damage by preemptively firing on one of the opposing vessels that has not fired yet? If instead, you fire at one of your enemy's other ships, the dreadnought may survive until next turn, but you may take out an opposing unit before it can fire at you. That could give you a bit less total damage this turn, something that adds up over a multi-turn fight.

If you have seeking weapons available and the dreadnought has indeed fired everything, then the decision may be even easier. Fire direct-fire weapons at opposing ships and target all available seeking weapons on the dreadnought (or another ship with no remaining defenses). You may get lucky and take out the ship you are firing at *and* the defenseless dreadnought.

This works both ways. Should you win the initiative roll, consider firing the weapons on the ship you most want to save first. Your enemy just might leave it alone and concentrate his fire on those ships that can still harm him this round.

Rated the best Call Out Note of this issue of *Captain's Log*.

YOU REALLY DON'T WANT TO GO THERE

— Lieutenant JG Bill Stec, *USS Pennsylvania*

Do you hate it when the Klingons flank your clumsy Federation cruisers, only to hit you from the side where your photons cannot bear? Then it might be time to play games with the Klingon player's head.

Keep some small ships, preferably three battle frigates or war destroyers, to the rear and one side of your cruiser line. Normally you would move your small ships first, saving your cruisers until they can line up a photon target. Instead try moving a cruiser or two into an exposed position for the Klingon to flank them. Make sure they use the Boost Shields! special action.

It is possible the Klingons will sense a trap, and move more small ships first to force you to commit your small ships before moving his cruisers. In this case you have a choice. You can have your small ships stay together, use the Overload! special action, and move them closer to the cruiser line but stagger their fore arcs (say 12 o'clock, 10 o'clock, and 9 o'clock). If the Klingon tries to flank anyway, he takes some overloaded photons or he stays out of the small ships' forward arcs. This is called "area denial." Or you might send your small ships off to the side in a J-turn hoping to get behind some unsuspecting Klingon, but this is somewhat risky, as he may just turn and beat up your small ships instead of the cruisers.

If the Klingon is unwary, he may take the bait and try to flank your cruisers at close range. If he is within 12 inches of your

small ships, use the Overload! special action and move up on his flank and let him have it. Three battle frigates/war destroyers with overloads can kill a typical Klingon cruiser easily, or can cripple a heavy battlecruiser.

Sometimes the threat of overloaded photons can encourage the Klingon to change his movement plans to avoid an obvious trap. Or you can set up a trap and plan to take advantage of him seeing it and reacting to it. At the least it has him reacting to your moves, which is never a bad thing.

VOLLEY VOUS — A CALL TO ARMS STYLE

— Captain Terry O'Carroll, *HMAS New South Wales*

When resolving the damage from weapons in *A Call To Arms: Star Fleet*, players may choose the order in which the damage from different weapons is resolved. This order can be important because some weapons will average more damage per hit than others when striking the hull of a ship. When rolling on the attack table, a roll of "one" will be a bulkhead hit and score no damage. Any other roll will score one point of damage. On average, a hull hit will score five-sixths of a point of damage.

Weapons with the Precise trait, however, will never hit the bulkheads and will score critical hits on rolls of five or six, averaging one point of damage.

Hits from weapons with the Devastating trait (photon torpedoes and seeking weapons) will score no damage on a "one," but will score two critical levels on a "six," for one bonus damage point, assuming that they hit an undamaged system, and so should score one damage point, on average.

Therefore, you should resolve any weapons damage in the following order: non-precise, non-devastating weapons (e.g., disruptors), then precise and devastating weapons. (The order in which precise and devastating weapons are resolved should not make much difference on average.)

If the early fire brings the shield down, the later fire will have more effect. Of course, if the damage is not enough to bring down the shield, or there is no shield, it does not matter what order you resolve the damage in.

KEEPING A DRONE ON OVERWATCH

— Ensign Dal Downing, *USS Wisconsin*

When playing a multi-ship engagement, do not lose track of the damage and which weapons enemy ships have fired. If a unit becomes crippled, there is a chance that it may have lost the ability to fire some or all of its weapons due to critical hits to its weapons systems. Another aspect of being crippled is there is a coin flip chance that a unit will lose any special traits that it could use for defensive fire such as anti-drone or tractor beam.

At a time like this, a seeking weapon (be it a drone or a plasma torpedo) will automatically hit a crippled unit making it a sitting duck. This may make it more than worth your while to chunk a seeking weapon or two at him. Even if you do not manage to out right kill him on impact, you still have a fair chance of causing more critical hits, which can push its escalation level higher resulting in its destruction in the end phase.

PHASERS OR ANTI-DRONES?

— Cadet Dixon Simpkins, *HMCS Saskatchewan*

When taking long-range drone fire and there are no acceptable targets in the arc from which you are receiving the drones it is better to use phasers for drone defense. Every time the Anti-Drone trait is used there is a risk of rolling a "one" which empties the anti-drone and reduces the defensive dice available. Using phasers, which otherwise cannot be used against enemy ships, preserves the Anti-Drone trait for later use. This assumes that phasers alone are enough to destroy the (currently) incoming drone wave. Of course, if the Anti-Drone trait is needed to save the ship from the immediate threat, they should be used now rather than later.

A CALL TO ARMS STAR FLEET

COMBAT ESCORTS

by Tony L. Thomas, *USS Tennessee*

As the General War progressed, all the Alpha Octant empires designed and built more powerful ships. When massed in late-war-era fleets, these ships were capable of hurling massive waves of seeking weapons, often far too much for any one defending ship to survive. The solution was to develop a class of warship specifically designed to cope with these waves of seeking weapons. Escort ships are conversions of standard warships emphasizing defensive firepower. Having one or two of these special escorts in a fleet greatly reduces this threat.

New Trait

The following new trait is proposed for *A Call to Arms: Star Fleet* and is offered for playtest. It may (or may not) become a part of the game at some future point, but it does a better job of reflecting this class of ship from the *Star Fleet Universe*. Remember that traits in italics cannot be lost by any means.

Escort: Due to the specialized electronics suite in this vessel, it may contribute its phasers, plasma-D racks, and drones to the defensive fire of any friendly ship within eight inches and in the arc of its weapons. As always, each weapon may only be fired once per turn and may be used to conduct Defensive Fire! or to attack enemy ships as normal, at the captain's discretion. (In effect, escorts get to use Defensive Fire! without it counting as their one allowed special action for the turn.) Remember that each AD of phaser-3, drone, or plasma-D kills one AD of enemy drone or plasma.

† This fire control system is known as aegis, which is named for the shield carried by the Greek god Zeus. Aegis escorts serve important roles in *Star Fleet Battles*, *Federation Commander*, and even in *Federation & Empire*. This article makes a few of these ships available to the players of *A Call to Arms: Star Fleet*.

New Weapon Systems

Many escort ships are equipped with new weapon systems specifically designed to knock out incoming seeking weapons.

Gatling Phasers: Originally developed by the Hydran Kingdom, these weapons function by firing multiple bursts of short-ranged phaser-3 fire. As the phaser-G is still in playtest, it can be simulated by considering it a phaser-3 mount with Multi-Hit 2 until actual stats are released. This will generate results similar to the multiple pulses fired by the phaser-G. It should be noted that Gatling phasers were used only by the Hydrans (most warships have them) and Federation escorts (not standard warships). Any given Orion ship can have one Gatling phaser (total).

Phaser-G: range: 6 inches, 4 AD, Accurate +1, Kill Zone 2, Precise

Note: As the phaser-G is designed to knock down incoming seeking weapons, unlike other phasers, each hit scored will remove one incoming AD of drones or plasma torpedoes.

NEW SHIPS

And what use are new rules and ship types without new ships? At right you'll find escort variant stats and pictures for two escorts for each empire found in the core rulebook. If people like these, we'll provide more in a future PDF newsletter.

Miniatures painted by Hugh Paton.

UNITED FEDERATION OF PLANETS

War Destroyer - Escort variant (DWE) 135 points.

Add Escort trait. Remove Photon Torpedoes. Increase Drone to 4 AD. Change Phaser-3s to Phaser-Gs.

0851 *Presidents Bush*

0852 *President Yeltsin*

0853 *President Gorbachev*

0854 *President Reagan*

0855 *Prime Minister Thatcher*

0856 *President Nixon*

0862 *President Hillary Clinton*

0871 *President Lincoln*



Light Cruiser - Escort variant (CLE) 110 points

This variant is based on the *Texas*-class Light Cruiser, not the *Kearsarge*-class New Light Cruiser.

Add Escort trait. Remove Photon Torpedoes. Increase Drone to 4 AD. Change 2 AD each of PH / SH Phaser-1s to 1 AD each of PH / SH Phaser-Gs. Remove Phaser-3s. Increase Shuttles to 4. Decrease Labs to 2.

901 USS *Harry Lee*

955 USS *Scharnhorst*

961 USS *Koroviev*

956 USS *Ney*

958 USS *Crassus*

965 USS *Patton*



KLINGON EMPIRE

War Cruiser - Escort variant (D5E) 160 points

Add Escort trait. Remove one existing bank (2 AD) of Phaser-1s. Replace Disruptors with two banks of 2 AD Phaser-1s; one with FH,P arc and one with FH,S arc. Add 2 AD of PH arc Phaser-3s. Add 2 AD of SH arc Phaser-3s.

IKV *Rebuker*

IKV *Represser*

IKV *Reducer*

IKV *Rejector*

IKV *Repeller*

IKV *Refuter*



Battle Corvette - Escort variant (E5E) 115 points

Add Escort trait. Remove Disruptors and replace with drone (total 4AD).

IKV *Exorcism*



ROMULAN STAR EMPIRE

BattleHawk Destroyer - Escort variant (BHE) 100 Points
 Add Escort trait. Replace Plasma-Gs with Plasma-Ds; one launcher with PH arc and one with SH arc.

- Moonwing*
- Romian Wing*
- Sun Wing*
- Vesuvian Wing*



SparrowHawk Light Cruiser - Escort variant (SPM) 160 Points
 Add Escort trait. Delete F,P and F,S Phaser-1s and Plasma-Fs. Add 2 Plasma-D launchers with PH arc and two Plasma-D launchers with SH arc. Each of these 4 Plasma-Ds are separate weapon systems. P-S Phaser-3s should be 3AD each.

- Dark Angel*
- Eternal Guardian*
- Guarding Eagle*



CONFEDERATION OF THE GORN

Battle Destroyer - Escort variant (BDE) 120 Points
 Add Escort trait. Replace Plasma-F launchers with Plasma-D launchers; one PH arc and one SH arc.

- Impenitrable*
- Jaw Breaker*
- Little Jaw*
- Scorcher*
- Swiftsure*
- Zetstz*



Light Cruiser - Escort variant (CLE) 150 Points
 Add Escort trait. Replace Plasma-F launchers with Plasma-D launchers; one PH arc and one SH arc.

- Dragonscale*
- Ironcrest*



KZINTI HEGEMONY

Frigate - Escort variant (EFF) 95 Points
 Add Escort trait. Add Anti-Drone 3 trait. Delete Disruptor. Reduce Drones to 2 AD.

- FF129*
- FF175*
- FF214*
- FF284*
- FF304*



Medium Cruiser - Escort variant (MEC) 160 Points
 Add Escort trait. Replace Disruptors with 3 AD of Phaser-1s with F,P,S arc.

- Arrogance*
- Deathguard*
- Keenness*
- Prowess*
- Sharpness*



THOLIAN HOLDFAST

Patrol Cruiser - Escort variant (PCE) 90 Points
 Add Escort trait. Reduce F,P,S arc Phaser-1 to 2 AD. Add 4 AD of Phaser-3s with F,P,S arc.

- Enforcer*
- Shielder*
- Warder*



Destroyer - Escort variant (DE) 125 Points
 Add Escort trait. Reduce F,P,S arc Phaser-1 to 2 AD. Replace Disruptors with 1 AD each of Phaser-1s. Add 4 AD of Phaser-3s with F,P,S arc.

- Wildfire*
- Wildrock*
- Wildwind*



NEW SHIPS FOR A CALL TO ARMS STAR FLEET

These new ships are in "playtest status" and are scheduled for future production. Appropriate miniatures will be available as pre-releases during January.

UNITED FEDERATION OF PLANETS

Gettysburg-class Heavy Command Cruiser (CB) 230 Points

Heavy command cruisers are just what the name implies: heavier versions of the command cruisers that led squadrons during the early part of the General War.

Ships of the Class: 1728 *Gettysburg*, 1729 *Kadesh*, 1730 *Thermopylae*, 1731 *Cannae*, 1733 *Isandhlwana*, 1736 *Kursk*, 1737 *Coral Sea*, 1742 *Austerlitz*, 1747 *Rossbach*, 1749 *Vincennes*.

Turn: 6
Shields: 28
Damage: 36/12
Troops: 6
Craft: 4 Shuttles
Traits: Command +1, Labs 8, Tractor Beam 2, Transporter 4

Weapon	Range	Arc	AD	Special
Phaser-1	18	FH	4	Accurate +2, Kill Zone 8, Precise
Phaser-1	18	PH	2	Accurate +2, Kill Zone 8, Precise
Phaser-1	18	SH	2	Accurate +2, Kill Zone 8, Precise
Phaser-1	18	T	2	Accurate +2, Kill Zone 8, Precise
Phaser-3	6	T	2	Accurate +1, Kill Zone 2, Precise
Photon	15	F	4	Devastating +1, Multihit 4, Reload
Drone	36	T	2	Devastating +1, Multihit D6, Seeking

Mars-class Battleship (BB) 420 Points

The *Mars*-class battleships are easily as big as two heavy cruisers and a third again larger than dreadnoughts. Designed to lead powerful fleets on major assaults, these ships are so huge they mount aft-firing torpedoes in case an enemy tries to approach from behind. The ship has vast amounts of power with forests of launchers and phasers pointing in every direction.

Ships of the Class: *Mars*, *Ares*, *Nebu*, *Kali*, *Hachiman*, *Horus*, *Tyr*.

Turn: 10
Shields: 45
Damage: 100/34
Marines: 13
Craft: 6 Shuttles
Traits: Command +2, Labs 6, Probe 2, Tractor Beam 5, Transporter 8

Weapon	Range	Arc	AD	Special
Phaser-1	18	FH	2	Accurate +2, Kill Zone 8, Precise
Phaser-1	18	AH	4	Accurate +2, Kill Zone 8, Precise
Phaser-1	18	PH	3	Accurate +2, Kill Zone 8, Precise
Phaser-1	18	SH	3	Accurate +2, Kill Zone 8, Precise
Phaser-1	18	T	3	Accurate +2, Kill Zone 8, Precise
Phaser-3	6	T	3	Accurate +1, Kill Zone 2, Precise
Photon Torpedoes	15	F	6	Devastating +1, Multihit 4, Reload
Photon Torpedoes	15	F	2	Devastating +1, Multihit 4, Reload
Photon Torpedoes	15	A	2	Devastating +1, Multihit 4, Reload
Drone	36	T	6	Devastating +1, Multihit D6, Seeking
Drone	36	T	3	Devastating +1, Multihit D6, Seeking

KLINGON EMPIRE

E5 Battle Corvette

110 Points

This curious ship was the result of a project by the Kozenko Design Bureau to produce ships out of surplus parts from other designs. The hull came from an E4 corvette, the boom from an F5 frigate, and the engine from a D5 war cruiser. The ships were not popular with their captains but several were built. The E5D variant replaced the disruptors with extra drone racks.

Ships of the Class: *Evil, Excommunication, Exorcism, Epiphany, Egalitarian, Ecclesiastic, Eccumenical.*

Turn: 3

Shields: 17

Damage: 12/4

Marines: 3

Craft: 2 Shuttles

Traits: Agile, Labs 2, *Probe 0*, Tractor Beam 1, Transporter 1

Weapon	Range	Arc	AD	Special
Phaser-1	18	PH, F	1	Accurate +2, Kill Zone 8, Precise
Phaser-1	18	SH, F	1	Accurate +2, Kill Zone 8, Precise
Phaser-2	12	A, P, S	2	Accurate +1, Kill Zone 4, Precise
Phaser-3	6	PH	1	Accurate +1, Kill Zone 2, Precise
Phaser-3	6	SH	1	Accurate +1, Kill Zone 2, Precise
Disruptors	24	F, P, S	2	Accurate +1, Multihit 2
Drones	36	T	2	Devastating +1, Multihit D6, Seeking

The E5D variant has four AD of drones and no disruptors, and a point value of 120.

F5W War Destroyer

135 Points

The original F5 was the galaxy's smallest destroyer, but the much improved F5W fixed any shortcomings it had. This vessel therefore grew to be a favourite of the Deep Space Fleet and was built in large numbers.

Ships of the Class: *Axe Destroyer, Axe Killer, Axe Soldier, Battle Destroyer, Battle Killer, Battle Soldier, Blood Destroyer, Blood Killer, Blood Soldier, Death Destroyer, Death Killer, Death Soldier, Doom Destroyer, Doom Killer, Doom Soldier, Dragon Destroyer, Dragon Killer, Dragon Soldier, Fire Destroyer, Fire Killer, Fire Soldier, Storm Destroyer, Storm Killer, War Soldier, War Destroyer, War Killer.*

Turn: 3

Shields: 18

Damage: 14/5

Marines: 6

Craft: 2 Shuttles

Traits: Agile, Anti-Drone 1, Labs 2, Tractor Beam 2, Transporter 2

Weapon	Range	Arc	AD	Special
Phaser-1	18	F, P	1	Accurate +2, Kill Zone 8, Precise
Phaser-1	18	F, S	1	Accurate +2, Kill Zone 8, Precise
Phaser-1	18	A, P, S	3	Accurate +2, Kill Zone 8, Precise
Phaser-3	6	PH	1	Accurate +1, Kill Zone 2, Precise
Phaser-3	6	SH	1	Accurate +1, Kill Zone 2, Precise
Disruptor	24	FH	2	Accurate +1, Multihit 2
Drones	36	T	2	Devastating +1, Multihit D6, Seeking

ACTASF TACTICS 101: TERRAIN

by Lieutenant Commander Tony L. Thomas, *USS Tennessee*

In this, the third in our series of tactics for *ACTASF*, we are going to be looking at terrain. We will take an in-depth look at each type of terrain that might be encountered in *ACTASF*. We'll discuss how to use these terrain features to accentuate your ship's advantages and how to use them to take advantage of your opponent's weaknesses.

All previous games in the *Star Fleet Universe* have had rules for terrain but none have emphasized it to the extent that *ACTASF* does. Both *Star Fleet Battles* and *Federation Commander* have terrain as part of some scenarios, but most do not. In fact, many players of *SFB/FC* have never even played a scenario that involves any terrain other than open space. *ACTASF* is quite different in that respect. Some of the general scenarios and tactical challenges specify a particular setup for the terrain features, or more properly: Stellar Debris as *ACTASF* calls it. Almost every other scenario specifies a random selection of Stellar Debris.

In *ACTASF*, the occurrence of Stellar Debris is determined by rolling a d6 for every one square foot section of the map. Any section for which a "6" is rolled has terrain (Stellar Debris) located in it. With the typical map starting at 4 x 4 feet, this gives you 16 opportunities to have at least one piece of Stellar Debris. That's almost a 95% chance that you'll have at least one piece of Stellar Debris. This means that in *ACTASF*, open space battles are the exception, not the rule.

So... what does this mean for you? Generally speaking, the various types of Stellar Debris have many characteristics in common. They all block line of sight, so while you can fire into or out of Stellar Debris, you typically cannot fire through it. This allows you to use the area immediately behind a piece of stellar debris to great advantage. You can use it to protect a critical ship or to allow a damaged ship a chance to repair shields and critical hits. Movement through Stellar Debris is not without risks either. This means you can often use Stellar Debris to guard your fleet's flanks from an attack.

Cloaked Romulans are especially fond of Stellar Debris. The Disengage Cloaking Device! special action allows the Romulan to make a 6-inch move in any direction as part of the de-cloaking process. This can often be used to "leap" across a piece of intervening Stellar Debris, either to get a bead on a juicy target or just to get out of the line of sight. Bear this in mind whenever facing Romulan ships and the cloaking device.

ACTASF has six different types of Stellar Debris that may be present in a battle. The list below lists each type along with the probability it will occur in a given space:

Asteroid Field	50 %
Dust Cloud	33 %
Comet	5.5 %
Planet	5.5 %
Nebulae	3.0 %
Black Hole	3.0 %

Now let's take a closer look at each type of Stellar Debris:

Asteroid Field: Asteroid fields are the most common type of Stellar Debris encountered in *ACTASF*. On average one-half of all Stellar Debris generated will be an Asteroid Field. These can range in size from the entire map to just a fraction of one square foot. The *ACTASF* rulebook recommends an area of 4 to 6 square inches. Asteroid Fields have a density rating which indicates how closely packed the individual asteroids are or how quickly they move about in the field. These density ratings range from 6 to 10. Ships may enter asteroid fields at will, but must roll a d6 and add their Crew Quality Rating. If the result equals or

exceeds the field's density rating, the ship passes through without striking any asteroids. If the roll fails however, the ship suffers an attack using as many Attack Dice as the distance the ship moved, in inches. And that's total movement, not just movement in the asteroids. A movement of 10 inches up to the field and then 2 inches into the field would net 12 AD of potential hits if the roll failed. This is why a handy asteroid field makes a good external shield for your flanks. Not many opponents are willing to brave the asteroid damage to get a good shot on your flank.

For those brave enough to enter the field and survive however, there is good news. Any ship inside an asteroid field receives the trait 5+ Stealth (or a +2 bonus to Stealth if you already have it) when attacked, as the numerous rocks interfere with target locks. That means that on average, 33% of the shots that would normally hit your ship now miss. This penalty does not apply to fire out of an asteroid field. For this reason alone, many ships (especially Orion Pirates, who already have Stealth) like to move to the forward edge of a convenient asteroid field and fire out at other targets. Cloaked Romulans automatically lose the benefit of their cloaks while inside an asteroid field.

A particularly brutal use of the Asteroid Field is the "Crippled Ship Revenge!" tactic. The captains of ships doomed to die a certain death have been known to charge through a nearby asteroid field at max possible speed to end their movement as close as possible to several enemy ships. If the Crew Quality roll is failed, the ship may blow up in the midst of the opponent's ships.

Dust Cloud: Dust clouds are similar to asteroid fields in size and only slightly less common. Ships can enter/exit dust clouds at will and can even move about inside them. Unlike Asteroid Fields however, ships take no damage from moving inside a Dust Cloud. That's not to say they aren't without effect. All ships suffer a -1 modifier to their Crew Quality as result of the random glitches common inside of these dust clouds. In addition, Romulans also lose the benefits of being cloaked while inside a dust field. As with an asteroid field, ships within the dust cloud that are attacked receive the 5+ Stealth trait (or +2 to Stealth if they already have that trait) as the dust particles interfere with target locks. If a ship located inside a dust cloud attacks a ship outside the dust cloud, that ship also gains the Stealth 5+ trait as the target lock interference works both ways.

Comet: Comets are represented in *ACTASF* by combining the rules for Asteroid Fields and Dust Clouds. While they can be any size, all comets consist of a small, frozen ball of ice with a long, thin tail following behind. The main ball of ice at its head should be 1 to 2 inches in size and is treated as a very small asteroid field. The tails of comets are typically 6 to 18 inches long and 1 to 4 inches thick and use the same rules as dust clouds.

Planet: The largest bodies of Stellar Debris usually encountered in *ACTASF*, planets can range in size from moons as small as 1 inch in diameter to huge gas giants of 12 inches in diameter or more. They will typically only be one planet on the map at a time as they orbit each other at great distances and the typical gaming table would need to be a mile or so long to reflect that, although a large planet may have several moons in orbit around it and many of these may be on the map. As with other types of Stellar Debris, planets block line of sight. Ships may however fly "over" planets without penalty, although if a ship is on the planet template, the line of sight will be clear to any ship within range.

Planets in *ACTASF* have a unique feature: the gravity well. The depth (or size of the gravity well is based on the size (diameter) of the planet itself. A larger planet has a deeper gravity well. The gravity well can be used by wily captains to gain a great movement advantage. Ships that begin their Movement Phase inside the gravity well and parallel to the planet can "orbit" the planet. So long as the ship stays at the same distance from the planet's surface, it may be moved forward around the planet. For all intents and purposes, this movement will be considered straight-line movement as centripetal force and the planet's gravity

keep the ship in orbit.

Gas or Ice Giants often have a planetary ring around them. Planetary rings are typically 3 inches wide and located 1d6+6 inches from the planet's surface. These are treated as either dust clouds or asteroids fields (50:50 chance of either one).

Nebulae: These are immense clouds of gas, light years across. Nebulae are easily large enough to encompass the entire playing area and then some. When battles take place in a Nebula, the ships suffer from these debilitating effects:

- All weapon ranges are halved.
- All Attack Dice suffer a -2 penalty.
- Shields are set to 0 and may not be increased in any way.
- Shuttles are instantly destroyed.
- Plasma Torpedoes automatically lose one of their Attack Dice.
- The Cloak, Scout, and Transporter traits do not function at all.

In addition, during every End Phase, every ship must roll two dice. The first die determines if the ship has been moved off course by the weird, twisting and turning energy patterns inside the Nebula. On a 1-2, turn the ship 45° left, on a 3-4, the ship does not turn, and on a 5-6, turn the ship 45° right. The ship is then moved forward a number of inches equal to the roll of the second die. This is considered Compulsory Movement.

Black Hole: These are the most devastating form of Stellar Debris in *ACTASF*. All models (including other Stellar Debris) will be pulled towards a Black Hole during the Compulsory Movement Phase of every turn. The distance by which a model is moved, is dependent on its original distance from the Black Hole. The closer a unit is, the more it is sucked in. This is considered to be Compulsory Movement and the units heading does not change. Once a model makes contact with a Black Hole, it is instantly destroyed.

Terrain is an essential part of playing *ACTASF* and knowing how to use it is an essential part of victory!

DESIGNING SCENARIOS FOR A CALL TO ARMS STAR FLEET

Like many games, *ACTASF* is played in scenarios, each being a specific historical (or non-historical) event. During the time of the *Star Fleet Universe*, there were tens of thousands of scenarios fought. We invite you to create new scenarios for *ACTASF* and to send them to either company. (We compare notes and both companies approve all scenarios, so it's not like anybody is sneaking anything past one company or the other.)

When writing scenarios, however, there are a few general guidelines that you should consider.

1. Avoid creating new units. Sure, there are a lot of ships and other things in *Star Fleet Battles* that should and will come into *ACTASF*, but it's up to the game designer to bring them into the game, not scenario writers. You're welcome to suggest to Matthew that he add a certain unit, but some *SFB* scenarios will just have to wait until that happens to be done correctly.

2. Use groups of ships that match the squadron boxes.

3. You really need to create a scenario players cannot simply create for themselves by using a standard scenario and selecting other ships for it.

4. Scenarios live and die by special rules. You should avoid creating new *game* rules (that's Matthew's job!) but you can create special *situation* rules. These need to be based on something actually possible or consistent with the background, not just an arbitrary directive.

5. Avoid creating new historical scenarios, i.e., if you want to do a scenario that is part of history, convert one from *SFB*.

6. Avoid outlawing standard rules just to force the players to go where you want them to go and do what you want them to do.

A NEW SCENARIO FOR A CALL TO ARMS STAR FLEET The First of Its Kind

Information obtained from an Orion mercenary has provided you with a golden opportunity. It seems that your enemies have completed the design and construction of their newest prototype starship and your political and military leaders are at odds as to how the introduction of this new class of starship will affect the war effort. The politicians feel the enemy may use the new starship as a strong point to force diplomatic concessions. The military leaders fear it will offer the edge needed to urge a new offensive in the ongoing war.

Either way, the task has fallen on you and your task force to at the very least, learn more about this new vessel and if possible find a way to delay the full-scale introduction of this class of ship into production.

Destroying the ship (thereby showing the enemy that it is an ineffective class at best) would be a good start!

Fleets: Players select a Conflict Intensity level, although the total points per side should never exceed 2,000. The Defender receives 75% of the Attacker's points, although the defender does receive a Mobile Base (the primary R&D facility) at no additional cost and the "First of its Kind" can be purchased for 50% of the value listed in the *ACTASF* rulebook.

Note: As this vessel is literally the first of its kind, you may only have one of them in this scenario.

Pre-Battle Preparation: No initial roll is made for set up order. The Defending player always sets up first.

An Earth-like planet is placed in the middle of the Defender's side of the map. (This will be 12 inches from the centerline and 12 inches from either edge on the typical 4 foot x 4 foot map). A Mobile Base is placed 3 inches from the surface of the planet, on the side nearest the attacker.

Stellar Debris is then generated randomly for the remainder of the map.

The Defender deploys his forces anywhere within the deployment zone indicated on the set-up map.

The attacker will move his ships onto the map from the edge labeled Attacker's Deployment Zone in the first turn of the game.

Scenario Rules: The objective of this scenario is for the Attacking player to either obtain information about the "First of its Kind" vessel, to cripple or destroy the vessel, or to capture it.

1. **The First of Its Kind:** This vessel is a unique prototype. It has not been released for production and is currently undergoing trials to prove the concept. It is staffed with only a skeleton crew of engineers, civilian technicians, and a few officers. Because of the lack of a complete, well-trained crew and the in-production nature of the vessel, it suffers from the following penalties during this scenario:

- A. Reduced Crew Quality:** For the purposes of this scenario, treat this ship as having a crew quality of 3.

- B. Reduced Crew Numbers:** Since the ship does not have a full crew, it acts similar to a crippled ship in a "combat" situation. Movement is limited to 6 inches. Only one type (i.e., phasers, torpedoes, drones, etc.) of weapon may be fired each turn, and the ship may not use the All Power to Engines! or Maximum Warp Now! special actions.

- C. No Marines or Shuttles on Board:** As testing has not reached this stage, there are no Marine forces or shuttlecraft onboard the ship at this time. Shucks, who needs those smelly goons for a trial run around the star system?

2. Information Points: The total number of Information Points required can be calculated by multiplying the starting Damage score of the vessel by 2. These points can come from Labs or Probes, or from a combination of both. To win the game, the Attacking player must get an un-crippled ship with functioning labs off his edge of the map.

For example: A Klingon F5S Scout with a Turn Score of 3 would require the acquisition of 30 (3 x 10) points of information.

3. Capture: There are two ways to capture this vessel.

A. Towing: You can grab it in a tractor beam and tow it off your side of the map.

B. Capture: You may attempt to possess the ship and fly it off the map under its own power. To do this you need to deliver to the target ship a number of Marine units equal to the ship's starting complement of Marines, plus one unit. This will be enough Marines to secure the original crew and handle basic control of the ship. A captured ship may only move 6 inches a turn and may not fire any weapons in offensive mode.

Game Length: The game lasts until the end of the turn in which the requisite amount of information has been obtained and a qualified ship has left the map through the Attacker's Deployment Zone, when the last of the Attacking ships have left the map, or when all ships belonging to one side have been destroyed.

Reinforcements: Additional ships equal to 25% of the Defending player's starting point value arrive on Turn 6 and an additional 25% on Turn #10, if the game has not ended by that point. These forces are moved onto the table edge labeled Defender's Reinforcement Zone during the Movement Phase of Turns #6 and #10.

Victory and Defeat: The mission in this scenario is to

1. obtain information about the vessel,
2. delay its introduction into service, and/or
3. capture the vessel for study and reverse engineering.

The level of victory is determined by what goals are accomplished.

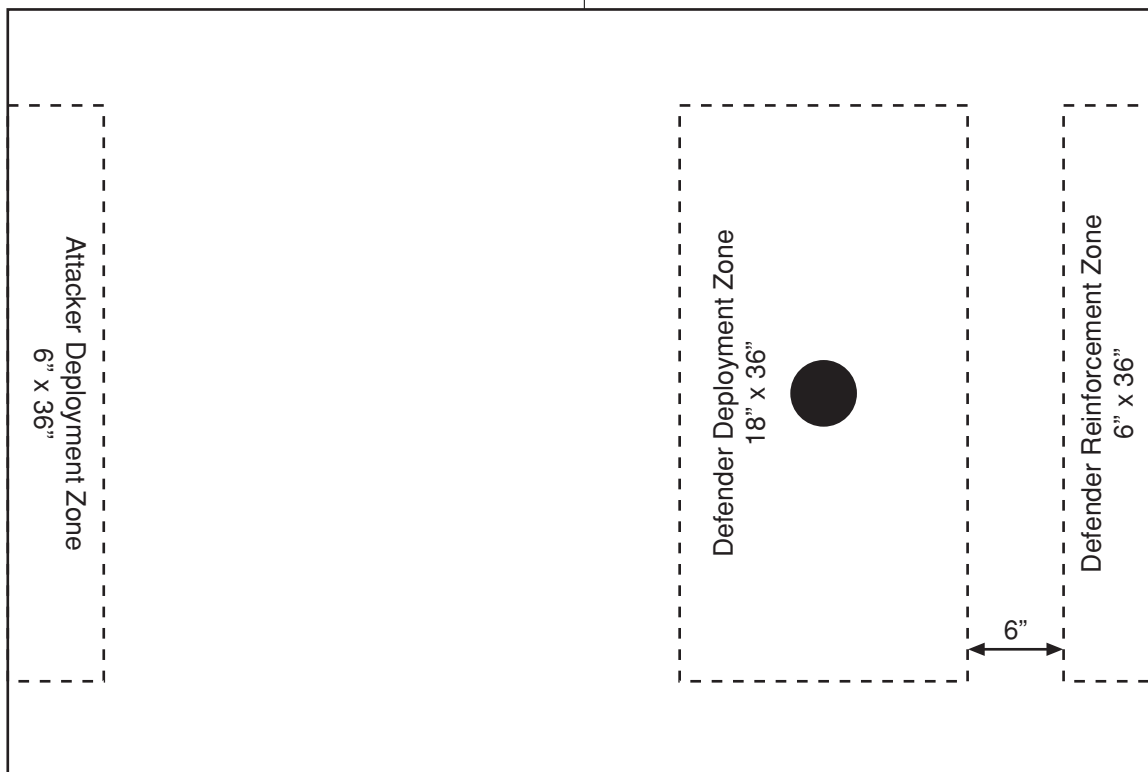
- If the Attacker gains the required amount of information and disengages, he wins a Marginal Victory.
- If the Attacker gains the required amount of information, cripples the vessel and disengages, he wins a Tactical Victory.
- If the Attacker gains the required amount of information, destroys the vessel, and disengages, he wins a Decisive Victory.
- If the Attacker captures the vessel and disengages it, he wins an Astounding Victory.
- As an added bonus, complete destruction of the R&D station will increase the level of victory by one, or turn a Defender win into a draw.
- Any other result is a win for the Defender.

Balance Options: To balance this scenario out between players of varying proficiency, there are several options that can be implemented:

1. Increase or Decrease the Information Points Required: By varying the number of information points needed, you can easily adjust the difficulty level of the game. Fewer points makes it easier to win, while more points makes it more difficult.

2. Adjust the Points Allowed: By giving the Attacker a 10-15% increase in points, you make it easier to win. Conversely, a 10-15% decrease in points makes it more difficult.

Battle Station Option: For a truly difficult game, change the Mobile Base to a Battle Station. If using this option, delete the reinforcements completely. The Attacker already has his hands full.



The Department of Strategic Studies

F&E: THE FUTURE

Last issue, we explained that once we got to the point of actually working on *F&E: Civil Wars*, the file was clearly too full and would have to be broken into two or three products. We have reached a point of decision and that will happen.

The small empires (LDR, the WYN, Vudar, Seltorians) will be part of the next product, which will be titled *F&E: Minor Empires* or something like that. We have made progress on this, as you can tell by the prototype LDR rules included in this issue.

The actual "civil wars" (Romulan, Lyran, Kzinti, and maybe some non-historical ones) will be left for another product under the original name *F&E Civil Wars*.

As the First and Second Usurper Wars, all of the Lyran civil wars, and the Romulan Civil War were all over before the official kickoff of the Andromedan Invasion, we would not absolutely have to do *F&E Civil Wars* before doing *F&E: The Andromedan War*.

But for now, the focus remains on the same target under the new title *F&E: Minor Empires*.

F&E: PROPOSALS BOARD

LOST SHIPS GETTING HOME

Paul Howard proposed a system of rules by which ships lost in battle here and there might "wander" home through the "backwater" of the enemy invasion forces. While clever, his system would have added a lot of work to the game and these randomly returning "lost" ships are already subsumed into the "depot" and "salvage" rules.

AUGMENTATION FOR BASES

Scott Tenhoff proposed rules to add the augmentation modules from *SFB* to the bases in *F&E*. This isn't really needed. First, the bases already have their fighter and PF modules. Second, any other modules can be subsumed into the refit structure, i.e., every base and every ship is getting a little better all the time and the individual improvements can be ignored.

BORDER PATROL

Alan de Salvo proposed a system of "ships assigned to border patrols" on borders not at war. The ships of neighboring empires would then be able to fight each other without actually being at war. As most non-war border skirmishes don't really damage ships, his system would impose fractional EP penalties for the loss of a patrol skirmish (e.g., a "crippled" result would cost the owning empire 0.2 EPs for "disruption of trade." This concept was found to add nothing worthwhile to the game system. A scenario of border patrols was considered likely to be boring.

KLINGON MUTINY

Eric Smith proposed rules to represent the infamous "Klingon mutiny" rules from *Star Fleet Battles*.

Under his system, whenever players rolled (against a Klingon enemy) for the possible capture of ships, a die roll of "10" or "11" or "12" would mean that a ship mutinied. This would have an effect on who got how much salvage, rather than an extra ship that was captured and could be used as such. The proposal produced such a small effect it was felt it was not worth the bother.

F&E WHY

Why were the Kzinti deployment zones for the Marquis's and Duke's fleets changed in 2003?

Because this better reflected the way the Kzintis used those fleets.

Why can't engineers function in the capital hex?

Because they weren't created to improve the capital defense but non-capital areas. Capitals already have all the infrastructure they need and the engineer units were created specifically to function in outer areas. There are several reasons for this. One is game balance: if they were allowed to work in the capital hexes the game would no longer work. (They needed to be in the game to reflect non-capital construction.) Perhaps the taxpayers who paid for those units wanted it to work that way.

Why are pursuits limited to six ships, meaning the pursuer is almost always outgunned by the cripples?

Because the pursuing fleet is spread out over a wide area trying to find the fleeing cripples and only six ships find them. It balances the game better that way. If a full fleet found the cripples, too many ships would be destroyed.

Why don't fighters increase in quality over time, as they can easily double or triple in BPV over the 18 years of the General War?

Because all units improved over time, and refits are subsumed into the game system. Everybody's fighters are getting better and so are everybody's ships. A hundred combat points in Y170 is not the same thing as 100 combat points in Y180, but the points are balanced from empire to empire.

Why are the off-map areas totally off limits?

Because of several reasons. It's a game balance feature, in that the Kzintis and Hydrans can be defeated but not eliminated. For another, the Coalition has no idea what's out there and attacking into unknown space (when they're already a long way from home) is downright dangerous.

Why can't electronic warning networks give the 1 BIR shift instead of +1 EW in a capital hex?

Because of game balance and because capital systems already have more than enough special rules.

Why do the Feds decide to go to war if a Klingon frigate enters hex 1804 (or attack the BATS in 1803), two hexes from their space, when obliterating a battle station at 1805 is totally ok?

Because limited war is not war, and the base in 1805 "threatens" the Klingons while hexes 1803 and 1804 do not.

Why does the percentage of ships able to escape from a battle (retreat without fighting) vary from 50% to 75%?

Because the numbers are calculated in integers (as you cannot retreat part of a starship). The only one that is 50% is the one for two ships. It basically boils down to half of the ships plus the "unchosen flagship candidates" which gives you a little bit of wiggle.

Why have you not released the other rulebooks on e23?

Because they have not been updated. We cannot upload non-updated books because whenever we do that we get horrible reviews that damage sales of the entire product line. It takes the staff at least a year to update each book, assuming they have nothing else to do. Projects like this will get a lot more attention when Jean is on permanent staff and can take over more of SVC's non-design duties.

TACTICAL NOTES

LYRANS - DO NOT BUILD TUGS

— Lieutenant JG Tom Ostergaard, *USS Nevada*

The Lyrans should not build tugs, since the Lyran survey cruiser and new survey cruiser are fully functional tugs and scouts, with a heavy cruiser's defense factors and with decent attack factors when you put a battle or carrier pallet or pods on them. In addition these ships can do survey work which regular tugs and scouts cannot.

Pay the extra five economic points to build a survey ship instead of a tug. When your on-map survey ship is not doing something as a tug, it can survey a hex on the map and earn an extra economic point for your treasury for the next turn. In addition, when possible, convert your four starting tugs to survey ships [although if you are building a survey ship per year instead of a tug, you cannot do this except once under (450.3)]. Just have a survey ship take an occasional break from tug duties to survey five hexes and you have paid for the upgrade of a ship that can produce economic points. Those economic points pay for the upgrade and give your tug inherent scout capabilities, while it can still carry and use a pallet or two K-pods, so build as many survey cruisers as you can and start using them on the map.

You must protect these survey ships well, especially the ones you do not put battle or carrier pallets or pods on, as your opponents will try to kill them as fast as they can as soon as they realize what a great multi-purpose ship you have.

You can use the existing pre-war tugs for the risky front-line missions that cannot be avoided.

ENGINEERED HARDPOINTS

— Lieutenant Commander Thomas Mathews, *USS Georgia*

Adding colonies co-located with existing bases is a long-standing practice as a way to help protect them with additional PDUs. Engineer units can add a PDU to a planet or colony by (433.32). In addition to the ability to add a PDU, they can add an extra PDU above the normal limits of (433.424) and (446.32). Using the engineer unit to add that extra PDU above the limit of (446.32) gives you that much more additional ComPot when the enemy does attack or raid the base.

A BATS and a colony with three PDUs has a ComPot of 21, plus 24 fighters, or a total of 45 or 250% greater than a BATS alone. The presence of both a colony and a base gives you the option to stay an extra round or two and cause additional damage to your opponent while he is trying to kill your base and PDUs. You also benefit from the electronic warfare points generated by the PDUs.

DO NOT FEAR THE REAPER

— Ensign Patrick Sledge, *USS Ohio*

Many players' first instinct when being pursued is to pick a Battle Intensity Rating of one to minimize losses. However this can result in lost opportunities for a retreating player to inflict meaningful damage on enemy forces.

Pursuit forces are generally designed to maximize combat potential density, meaning they tend to resolve damage less efficiently than a regular battle line. Further, the quest for density also means that valuable units may appear unprotected in a pursuit force, where they would rarely be seen on a regular battle line. For this same reason of density, scouts are less commonly seen in pursuit forces, meaning the odds are high of the retreating player having a favorable (or at least neutral) die roll shift due to electronic warfare. By selecting a high Battle Intensity Rating the retreating player gets a chance (under some of the most favorable conditions possible) to inflict a few points of extra damage on the enemy.

The cost to this is obviously the increased damage suffered

in return. Going from a Battle Intensity Rating of one to a Battle Intensity Rating of four means accepting a 7.5% increase in damage received. From a typical pursuit force this means somewhere in the neighborhood of six extra damage points, or enough for your opponent to direct-kill an additional crippled destroyer. Obviously, there are times where the extra damage would allow an opponent to kill a key unit, and in these cases picking a low Battle Intensity Rating remains appropriate.

In short, next time you are retreating evaluate the damage your enemy can do (and the key units in his battle force) instead of reflexively picking a low Battle Intensity Rating. Sometimes, you have to fear the reaper. But if you do not, then consider turning around and kicking him in the chops.

IN PRAISE OF THE HUMBLE E4

— Commander Peter Bakija, *USS New York*

The Klingon Empire's production schedule allows them to freely substitute E4s in F5 and F5L construction slots. While F5s are more effective combat units and should continue to be used for specialty variants (like the F5S, FV, and F5E), the humble E4 frigate is something that the Klingons should consider building instead of *some* of those F5s on a regular basis, for the following reasons:

1. It saves money. While you only save half of an economic point every time you substitute an E4 for an F5, over time, it adds up. If the Klingons replace an average of three F5s with E4s per turn over the length of a 34-turn game, that adds up to 51 economic points saved.

2. A hull is a hull. An E4 is just as good for the purposes of pinning or counter-pinning opposing fleets as an F5, and they count the same for the purposes of victory point calculations (603.3).

3. Most of the things that F5s end up being used for are better off done by E4s in the first place. Certainly in a basic unexpanded game of *Federation & Empire*, where Battle Groups (315.0) are not being used, F5s rarely see combat in fleet battle lines after the first few turns of the game. Instead, they generally are used as province guards or province raiders where they tend to just get killed outright by larger ships in small-scale combat (310.0), or as ad-hoc escorts in single-round carrier fights where the biggest thing that can be shot down is an ad-hoc frigate escort. In either of these cases the lower combat value of the E4 is unlikely to be an issue and if you are going to lose a ship to small-scale combat or directed damage, it might as well be a cheaper E4.

It is unlikely that the Klingons would ever replace all their F5 builds with E4s, as F5s continue to make better specialty ships and are very efficient combat units. But in the long run, the Klingons can benefit from regularly replacing some of their F5 builds with E4 builds.

FCRs CANNOT SAVE YOUR BACON ALL THE TIME

— Captain Scott Tenhoff, *USS California*

When you have used directed damage to cripple a carrier group, try to pursue them and destroy the entire group in a pursuit battle. Carefully observe if your opponent has an FCR to reinforce his crippled group. There are numerous times where an FCR cannot be added to a crippled carrier group.

The most obvious ones are when the carrier group is full. Hidden ones are the Gorn and Lyran carrier groups, as they are restricted to having only the minimum number of escorts. So if you have a Lyran CVL+CWE+DWE, it cannot be reinforced if all the ships are crippled (likewise Gorn carriers). But even more hidden in the rules is when there is a BTV and two escorts. Since a BTV counts as an "escort carrier," it may only have two escorts maximum, or zero escorts minimum (since it is a tug). In these conditions, an escort must be destroyed before an FCR can be added to "reinforce" the group.

F&E Q&A

by Mike Curtis, *FEAR*

TRANSLATION PLEASE!

Q: What do all of those abbreviations mean?

A: BATS (Battle Station), BIR (Battle Intensity Rating), ComPot (Combat Potential), EP (Economic Point), *FEAR* (*F&E* Answer Rapporteur), FRD (Fleet Repair Dock), G (ground forces battalion), GCE (Ground Combat Element), MB (mobile base), PDU (Planetary Defense Unit), SAF (Special Attack Force), SB (starbase) SFG (Stasis Field Generator), SIDS (Starbase Incremental Damage System), SIT (Ship Information Table), SoP (Sequence of Play), ESSC (Small-Scale Combat).

NEW RULINGS

(204.38) An extra starbase built (upgraded from a smaller base) in addition to the starting starbases before a starbase is lost can be considered a replacement for a starbase lost after the time the new starbase is built.

(318.432) If extra escorts are added, their loss does not create “ghost” escorts that take up command slots without providing any benefit.

(433.22) The conversion of a captured ship to your technology counts against the capacity of the base.

(443.4) A base must be undamaged to start the upgrade process. A base could be crippled or damaged by SIDS during the upgrade process and this would cancel the upgrade. (The funds paid for the upgrade are still there, “attached” to that base, and the upgrade can resume once the base is repaired.

(446.12) A convoy setting up a colony cannot simultaneously act as a supply point.

(525.23) No empires can share HDW modules.

PRODUCTION

Q: The Kzintis can only have one BCE (escort variant of a battlecruiser, highly desirable for increasing the ComPot of carrier groups) in service at a time (440.7). What if someone captures several Kzinti BCs? They convert them to native technology and want to convert them all to BCEs. Is that legal or would the capturing empire also be limited to having just one BCE in service? Can they sell them back to me?

A: Only standard variants (305.23) can be made from captured ships. A conjectural ship is not a standard variant.

Q: Does the production of a scout pod or pair of scout pods for a given empire count as the allowed scout ship substitution on a given turn under (432.41)?

A: Of course it does as the rule you cited states.

Q: *Captain's Log #43*, page 96, seems to state that the Kzintis can produce any number of drone ship conversions. However, the Order of Battle (705.3) says in the *F&E 2010* rulebook that they cannot build more than two DFs per turn.

A: The published rule (705.3) controls the situation, and the Q&A is incorrect. Note that the version of (705.3) in *F&E 2010* covers only the drone frigate (the only Kzinti drone ship in the basic game) but does state that this applies to all drone ships. *Advanced Operations* lists all of the drone ships and other ships that count against this limit as of the time it was printed:

“Can produce (by any means) no more than two drone ships of all types combined per turn. MDC, DND, CLD, count against this limit. Replacement of battle pods counts against drone limits; two battle pods built on the same turn count as one drone ship (one pod counts as one ship).”

Q: The Kzinti special construction rules state that they may substitute a DWE for an FF once per year starting in Y172. However, the SIT says that the YIS for the DWE is Y174, and all other indications everywhere else are that the DW and its variants are introduced in Y174. The question is, is the Y172 substitution note

an error, or are these early DWEs prototypes?

A: The DWEs in Y172S and Y173S are the prototypes. You can build a DW in place of the DWE if you desire but you can only build one DW hull per year until Y174 when normal production of the DWs kicks in. The historical Kzintis were so desperate to keep their carrier groups alive that they used the first DW prototypes for escort variants. *Go Furrballs!*

CONVERSIONS

Q: What happens when a BATS with one or two SIDS steps is upgraded to a SB? Would the number of SIDS steps remain the same after conversion, or would it increase proportionately? On the one hand, since the SB would be crippled if the BATS were crippled during the upgrade, it doesn't seem like two SIDS on the BATS should remain two SIDS on the SB. On the other hand, if the number of SIDS increased proportionately, you would end up increasing the cost to repair the base by upgrading it, which also doesn't seem quite right. Perhaps SIDS steps which existed before the upgrade began would be treated differently than ones taken during the upgrade?

A: See the (443.4) ruling on this question.

Q: If the DMH (Romulan DemonHawk) replaces both of its modular sections, does it cost two economic points to do so?

A: As per (525.64) any modules need to be taken from already existing SparrowHawk or SkyHawk modules that have been produced earlier.

Q: Does the DMH replacing both of its sections cost it two movement points?

A: No. It costs only one movement point per (525.65).

Q: The Romulan Fleet's Tholian Border Patrol Detachment sets up in hex 3319. Since that fleet area has no starbase, can one ship be placed on the starbase at 3518 in order for it to be converted?

A: The Romulan Patrol Detachment is not inactive while the Romulans are at war, so the question of having a starbase to convert a ship at is not valid.

Q: Does activating a Vulture dreadnought (525.66) take up starbase conversion capacity?

A: Yes, it is a four point minor conversion.

Q: Does activating a Vulture-V count against heavy carrier production?

A: Yes, it is classed as a heavy carrier by both fighter factors and the SIT for that ship.

Q: Does making a modular conversion count as operational movement? Could a ship that had its modules changed but didn't otherwise move be added to a reserve fleet?

A: If the conversion is done in the Production Phase it does not count as operational movement and the ship can be added to a reserve fleet. If the conversion is made during operational movement, then it counts as operational movement even if the ship did not change hexes and the ship cannot join a reserve fleet.

Q: Is a conversion from a Hydran FFT to an AH a one-point conversion under the SIT or a two-point conversion under (433.241)? The SIT says that an AH may be converted from FF for one EP. I say that the SIT controls the situation, that the FFT is an FF and for this reason the cost to convert this FFT to an AH is one EP. My opponent says rule (433.241) requires the FFT to be “unconverted” to a CU or HN and then converted again to AH for a total of two EP. Who is right?

A: He is. The term “FF” in this case refers to a base hull, not a variant such as an FFT. (An FFT is a transport, not a standard frigate.) All of these categories refer to base hulls:

FF = HN, CU, and CR.

DD = KN and LN.

DW = DWF and DWH.

NCA = MHK, IRQ, CHY, IRC, and MKI.

CA = RN, DG, RGR, LC, LB, and LM.

You know what? This game would be much simpler if we all got together and wiped out those methane-breathing scum and didn't have to put up with them having two parallel fleets that confuse the heck out of everybody, myself included.

Q: When converting a captured ship to your technology does the tech conversion count against the conversion capacity of a starbase? Rule (433.22) is not clear in this regard of the technology conversion.

A: Yes, this counts against the conversion capacity of a starbase. See the ruling on (433.22) in this issue.

Q: Can a conversion facility (minor or major) be used to convert a captured ship to your technology on the same turn the ship was repaired, provided the repair facility is in the same hex?

A: Yes, it is the same as any other ship being converted.

Q: Can I convert a Lyran FFT directly into a DWS?

A: Yes, but not as a single two-step conversion. It's actually three steps. First, pay an EP to convert the FFT transport into standard frigate, then pay for the two-step conversion into a DWS. To be done in a single turn, this must be done by the same base and the base must have enough total capacity to do both.

COMBAT

Q: I have a Lyran destroyer at a completed colony. Enemy forces have attacked and caused 12 points of damage. Can I cripple the destroyer for five points and let the seven remaining points fall on the colony with the intent of retreating the crippled ship and leaving the colony behind (to cover the retreat)?

A: No, the colony cannot be given up as voluntary damage points per (446.42). The enemy has to attack it on purpose.

Q: If a SAF is already crippled, is it automatically presumed disrupted (and thus there is no need to shoot it)?

A: That is correct. According to (520.41) the SAF is considered disrupted even if it started the combat round crippled. This could happen in a rare instance where it was involved in combat away from a base or PDU and then entered combat already crippled. This disrupted state represents the reduced effectiveness of the SAF. According to this rule you cannot destroy an SAF in an assault although in normal combat you can. If you catch one away from a base and do 18 points of damage to it with directed damage, with no other modifiers, you will kill it.

Q: My opponent is using an engineer regiment as an SAF. I say I can disrupt it with 12 damage points (same as a SAF) but he says I must use 16 as an engineer regiment is an eight-point unit. Who is right?

A: He is. Abraham Lincoln said: "If you call a tail a leg, a cow still has only four legs." Being an eight-point unit, the engineer regiment needs 16 damage points to be disrupted (crippled) and eight more to be killed. Unlike an SAF (520.41), you actually can kill the engineer unit outright.

Q: Under (526.254) a Logistics Task Force (LTF) can resolve SIDS at 4.5 damage points [nine by directed damage under (308.8)]. Can the LTF be crippled by spending the 54 (27x2) points of damage required? And then killed the next round for the additional 26 (13x2) points?

A: You can always use the full amount to direct cripple/kill any unit. SIDS are available so you can eat an elephant one bite at a time instead of trying to eat the whole elephant at once.

Q: Sequence of Play Step 5-3B establishes when the players make the determination whether ESSC will apply to the combat hex. In the event that both players have the option to elect ESSC or elect normal combat (i.e., ESSC is not mandatory or selectable by only one player), then what is the proper procedure for making the determination? Is the determination made secretly and simultaneously and then revealed (with ESSC occurring only on mutual selection), or is the determination made by one player, announced, and then made by the other player? Or is it just a generic handshake/negotiation?

A: See the last line of (310.115): "If both players have three

or fewer ships which exceed the limits of 14 and/or 19, and both agree, this option may be used."

Q: Due to the mauler I have on the battle line, I can deal out 44 damage points. Can I use them to cripple a DN in the formation box (36) and then kill it (5+3) as a single directed damage attack?

A: No, you cannot, as the two are separate attacks due to the nature of the formation rules.

Q: Can a SWAC be used from the support echelon (302.35)?

A: Yes, if the carrier supplying the SWAC is also in the support echelon.

Q: Can a SWAC from a starbase be used in an approach battle to that Starbase?

A: Yes, it could be used in the approach battle just as the base's fighters can be used.

Q: Rule (302.7) does not place any restrictions on the use of a SWAC by a retreating force. I can't find any restriction in (518.0) either. As the rules do not seem to restrict this we are currently playing as though a retreating Federation force can deploy a SWAC without restriction and recover it if it is not lost due to specific use or directed damage.

This however does not seem right to me. A slow-moving shuttle dropped out the back of a carrier that is accelerating in an effort to withdraw from combat should not be recoverable. The max speed on a SWAC with booster packs in *SFB* is 16 and it cannot use its EW capability if towed by tractor per *SFB* rule (J9.132). Booster packs are not available until Y180 in any case which gives a SWAC a max *SFB* speed of 8 prior to Turn #24.

With these things in consideration, can a SWAC be recovered by a retreating Federation force, or is its use during retreat an automatic loss for the Federation? Or should there be some limited chance of recovery (say a 1 in 6 chance) as it is moving, unlike a stasis ship that is auto killed?

A: The use of a SWAC is permitted by (518.0). You are overthinking the issue. Combat in *F&E* is an abstraction of several battles over many days. Remember that the pursuer can attack crippled vessels not in the pushed battle force.

Q: Do the rules mean that any time the owner of a planet fights over his own devastated planet he can absorb three damage points with the RDF (even during raids but not in ESSC) for no bad effects? Rule (508.162) says that you can't re-devastate to rack up points, but I suppose the defender can soak off three damage in raids and then three more in the combat phase.

A: Yes. Just think of it as the owner knows the terrain in and around his planet and uses it to his advantage every time.

SPECIAL QUESTIONS

Q: The Kzinti Order of Battle (705.3) refers to "three carrier pods and two battle pods at start." Since Kzintis use their pods in pairs, does this refer to pairs of pods?

A: That is an old version of the Order of Battle, before light tactical transports (which use single pods) appeared in the game. Current versions of the Order of Battle (on our website) correctly show six individual carrier pods and four individual battle pods, which can be used singly or (by a tug) in pairs.

Q: I haven't played *F&E* for about 12 years, but am thinking of getting the 2010 boxed set. Have the expansion sets been updated as well for the 2010 rules, or can I use my old ones?

A: Generally speaking, all of the expansions are still 2000 edition (*ISC War* was done for 2010), but errata for them is online and (given that) they work quite well with the 2010 version of the basic game. The staff is working to upgrade the expansions but it took well over a year to upgrade *F&E* from 2000 to 2010 so please be patient.

Q: Rule (204.38) states that strategic movement capability is reduced by every starbase destroyed and not replaced, but that building extra starbases doesn't add to your capability. So, if I build a new starbase on Turn #5, and another one gets de-

stroyed on Turn #10, do I retain my original capability?

A: As long as your net loss is zero, then you retain your original capacity.

Q: Can Tholian ships in the raid pool move more than two hexes from Tholian territory?

A: They can do so because they won't stay for any period of time and will return to the capital thereafter.

Q: When does the Depot reactivate (424.13) after you lose your capital? Once the shipyard is fully rebuilt? Or once you start rebuilding the shipyard?

A: If the depot is located at the capital shipyard then the depot becomes active again once the replacement shipyard is complete.

Q: Can you put ships in the depot on the turn it is complete or do you have to wait for next turn?

A: Follow the steps of the Sequence of Play and you'll know the answer. On the turn the depot is complete, it will be completed in the Economic Phase of the SOP. The use of the depot would be available during the Combat Phase of that turn (which happens later), but not during the Production Phase, which is already over.

Q: Can an extra escort be added to a CVEG under (515.2)?

A: Yes, based upon precedence under (502.922) CVBGs. Since a legal escort carrier can add one additional escort it still meets the intent of "one additional light or escort carrier and one additional light (SC4) escort."

Q: Does the bonus for an undevastated capital planet (523.12) apply for every planet in the capital system or just once for the main capital planet (Klinshai, Earth, etc).

A: It only applies to the capital planet, not planets in the capital system. So, only once per empire.

Q: Are Klingon and Lyran fighter HDW modules interchangeable the way KVPs and VP2/3 are?

A: No empires can share HDW modules.

Q: When the Tholians enter the war voluntarily, per (604.15) and (604.151), do they enter the war halfway through the turn (which would be at the beginning of the Alliance turn) or at the beginning of the turn (so that they can react and use reserve fleets during the Coalition turn)?

A: The Tholians cannot enter the General War prior to their phase of Turn #22 unless they are attacked earlier; see additional provisions under (503.3).

Q: Does the Hydran special supply tug (509.10) as specified in (509.5) provide an exception to being able to move when it cannot trace a line of supply to Hydran controlled space? Rule (509.51) specifies a limited number of ship turns of supply available to be used when it and any accompanying Hydran ships are out of supply.

A: Yes. The Hydran supply tug, as long as it has supply-turns left, can supply itself and other ships stacked with it. Once it hits zero supply-turns, it no longer functions and has to be re-supplied itself to function.

Q: I was able to move a Romulan ship into the Orion Enclave at hex 3012 and immediately declared internment to force the Orions to go neutral. The Federation had two police cruisers (one at each planet 2811 and 2812) which he reacted to my ship (instead of leaving the now neutral territory) and attacked my ship. As I read (503.511), is this not "reconquering"?

A: As soon the Romulan entered Orion space and activated neutrality the Federation ships have to leave. You cannot react to a ship that is activating neutrality (503.511).

Q: Do convoys building a colony (446.12) still act as a supply point?

A: No, this is similar to (412.24) NO DOUBLE DUTY: Because a tug cannot perform two missions at the same time, a tug which is setting up a mobile base cannot simultaneously function as a supply point. The same applies for building colonies.

Q: Does a convoy have to be on a Strategic Movement Node

under (414.3) to be moved strategically?

A: Yes, it does. Although, unlike ships, the convoy unit is a redirection of surplus freighters to an area, the ships being released back into civilian use and the naval staff to form the new convoy need to be at a Strategic Movement Node to form the new convoy (which is, essentially, moving a convoy).

Q: When, exactly, during the Sequence of Play, is the Imperial War Reserve activated? Is it on the turn the Klingons attack the Federation and is also at war with the Hydrans and Kzintis? See above question for why it matters with respect to diplomatic income.

A: War status with another empire is checked when the player empire is determining the total number of economic points available to the empire. This is in Phase 1C. So, in a normal game with the Klingons going to war with the Federation on Turn #7, the IWR would be available for activation on Turn #7 during the Production Phase (2B). The Klingons have already decided to go to war so that's fair.

Q: Can crippled ships use cloaks?

A: No, see (203.83) which says so. Crippled ships cannot use cloaks during evasion or operational movement.

Q: Can an operational base, moving in conjunction with friendly ships, enter a hex containing an enemy or neutral planet?

A: No, it cannot. See (453.21).

Q: The rules for Four Powers War (607.34) lists several Kzinti SC units. What are they?

A: Scout frigates with a deceptive designation so they can sneak past the Klingons.

Q: The scenario timeline says that the Tholians drop to 75% economy on Turn #26. Does that assume they entered the war (historically) on Turn #18?

A: Yes, it does. If they enter the war later, they drop to 75% economic output the same number of turns later.

Q: Rule (509.0) says that an LTT might be 1/2 or 2/3 of a tug, depending on the mission, and cannot do some missions at all. Likewise, a theater transport is 1/3 of a tug for those missions it can perform. Is that wording intended to allow me to assemble whatever combination of tugs, LTTs, and theater transports that are convenient to perform the task I need accomplished? For example, can an LTT and two theater transports build a colony?

A: In specific cases where three theater transports may be used to perform a mission, one LTT may be substituted for one of the three theater transports. This does not necessarily mean the reverse is true; one cannot argue that any number of theater transports can be substituted for an LTT or TG unless specifically allowed by the rules.

Q: What is the repair capability of a BSX?

A: This is listed in (420.42) in *F&E 2010* as 4. That chart lists all of the existing bases.

MONEY TALKS

Q: Can you scrap ships without using Advanced Deficit Spending (447.0)?

A: Certainly. While the rule isn't crystal clear, it does say that you can scrap ships whether you're in debt or not. In effect, scrapping ships without being in debt means you have arranged for a line of deficit credit but didn't actually use it.

Q: Can you scrap auxiliaries? The Alliance has a bunch of auxiliaries that I'd happily trade in for EPs.

A: No, auxiliaries are not ships, they are units. Only ships can be scrapped.

Q: Can I put one battle pod and one cargo pod on a Kzinti/Klingon/Lyran tug and carry five EPs somewhere? I want to blockade run some EPs but want a resilient ship if it gets intercepted.

A: Certainly! This is actually clever. Any of the tugs that use pairs of pods and account for the pods separately can do this.

THE LYRAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC IN *F&E*

(714.0) FLEET DATA (Y168F)

FIRST FLEET: Deploy in hexes 0711 and 0611.
Line Ships (4): CL, DW, FF, POL.
Aux Ships (8): LAC, LAA, LAS, SAC, 2xSAA, SAV, FTS.

SECOND FLEET: Deploy in hexes 0811 and 0812.
Line Ships (3): CW, DW, POL.
Aux Ships (6): LAC, LAA, SAC, 2xSAA, SAS.

THIRD FLEET: Deploy in hexes 0612 and 0712.
Line Ships (3): CW, DW, POL.
Aux Ships (6): LAC, LAA, SAC, 2xSAA, SAS.

FOURTH FLEET (Red Guard): Deploy in province 0711.
Line Ships (5): CA, 2xMP, 2xPOL.
Support Ships (3): CWS, MPS, MPG.
Aux Ships (2): SAV, FHL.
Resources: ADM, RESV.

FIFTH FLEET (Support): Deploy in province 0711.
Support Units (4): 2xAPT, 2xPTR.

GENERAL HQ: Deploy in province 0711 or by rules.
REPR, MON+V, 3xDIP, ENG.

(714.1) CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE

Fall Turns Y168+: DW, MP, (4xAuxPod).
Spring Turns Y169+: CW, MP, (4xAuxPod).

(714.2) SPECIAL CONSTRUCTION RULES

(714.21) SUBSTITUTIONS

Allowable Substitutions
SAA for AuxPod.
SAC for AuxPod once per turn.
LAA for 2xAuxPod once per turn.
LAC for 2xAuxPod once per year.

Downgrade Substitutions
POL or MP or FF or DD or DW for CW.
POL or MP or FF for DW.
POL for MP.

(714.22) RESTRICTIONS AND ALLOWANCES

Carriers: One carrier per year plus one escort carrier per turn.
Heavy Fighter Carriers: Production counts against either carrier or PFT build limits.
Fleet Carrier Resupply Ships: One per year by any means.
PF Tenders: One PFT by any means per turn. One CPF per turn; limit four in service. The limit in Y186S+ is seven.
Scouts: One per turn by any means.
Commando Ships: One per turn by any means.
Heavy War Destroyers: One per turn by any means.
Transports: Limit one LTT per year. Limit one APT or PTR per turn.
Pods: One per turn (may receive more as gifts).
Monitors: Prohibited from building (but may receive as gift).
Prime Teams: Receive one per turn and may buy an additional one while at war; limit four in service.
MMGs: One free when at war; may only replace if lost.
Diplomats: May start scenarios pre-deployed to the neighboring empires.
Engineers: One free when at war; may only replace if lost.
Admirals: Only one ever in service beginning Y167S.
Command Points: None at start; may purchase one per year.
Restricted Bases: Cannot build any base larger than a BTX.

Minor Shipyards: May build no more than:
one FF or POL slip for 10 EP;
one MP slip for 10 EP;
one DW slip for 15 EP.

Colonies: Prohibited from building.

Repair Facilities: Cannot build FRDs; may build one PRD per year when available.

Strategic Movement: Five free points per turn; may purchase up to five more. These will be of no real use without agreement of a neighboring empire to use their grid.

(714.24) DEPOT LEVEL REPAIR

Tracks (424.11): LDR-1 at 0711: All Lyran based warships.

(714.3) FORCE DEPLOYMENTS

Pod Deployment:

TYPE	START	MAX
BP	0	1
VP	0	1
RP	1	1
TP	0	1
SP	0	1
PFP	0	1

Fighter Deployment:

Initial: Y168S; Heavy: Y178F, Mega: Y177F.
Receive two free fighter factors per year.

PF Deployment:

Initial: Y178F; PFTs: Y179S; CPFs: Y179F.

Free Flotillas (502.62):

Y178F	Y179S	Y179F
1	1	1

Receive two free PF replacements per turn in Y180S.

X-Ship Introduction: Y182S, may upgrade one base to X-technology per (523.413).

Late War Combat Formations (318.4): Y180S.

Raid Pool (314.0): Initial: 1; Y176S: 2; Commando: 1; Blockade: 1.

Espionage & Sabotage: Only one E&S mission (534.0) per turn.

(714.4) ECONOMICS

Annex (753.0) Economics

LDR (7 EPs)	PROV	Minor	Major	Colony
On Map	1	0	0	2
Capital	0	1	0	0

The colonies are in the two BATS hexes.

The LDR receives two EPs of income from undefined "trade" conducted with each of the three neighboring empires; this increases to four EPs if the neighboring empire in question is at war with another neighboring empire (e.g., Lyrans at war with Hydrans). This income is lost if the LDR does not have a supply route to a given neighboring empire (e.g., to the Hydrans during most of the General War). This gives the LDR an income of 15 EPs per turn during most of the General War (one province, one minor planet, two colonies, four each from trade with Lyrans and Klingons).

Annex (759.0) Capital System

LDR: Demorak: 1 Minor*, 1 Battle Station; EWN

* "Capital Planet" with dockyard and two defense brigades (8xPDU) per (508.113). The LDR formed an Early Warning Network (EWN) via (537.3) by deploying three PDUs as Forward Defense Units (536.0) at separate locations within hex 0711.

NOTE: The current LDR SIT is on the Discus BBS.

(6WC.0) WALL CLOUD

An Altered Alliances Scenario – LDR at War

By Chuck Strong

This variant postulates that in the spring of Y169, the LDR was secretly convinced to join the Coalition by the Lyrans with the promises of concessions for captured Hydran territory. It was further postulated that the Lyran King had also privately hoped that fighting together as fellow Lyrans might move the LDR to rejoin the Lyran Empire in the future.

As for the Hydrans, this harrowing new dynamic sounded the war trumpet to the Kingdom which found itself confronted with a massive wall of Coalition forces.

(6WC.1) SCENARIO SETTING

(6WC.11) NUMBER OF PLAYERS: In this General War variant scenario, the LDR is considered a full Coalition partner.

(6WC.12) SCHEDULED DURATION: Continue to use rule (605.3) to end the war.

(6WC.13) AREA OF CONFLICT: All historically available territory available which now includes the LDR province (0711).

(6WC.14) SET-UP ORDER: Set up the LDR forces just after the Klingons are set up.

(6WC.15) MODULES USED: This scenario assumes usage of the following: *Advanced Ops (AO)*, *Fighter Ops (FO)*, *Combined Ops (CO)*, *Planetary Operations (PO)*, *Strategic Ops (SO)*, and *ISC War (IW)*. Data from *CL#46* is also used.

(6WC.2) SCENARIO NOTES

Modify the General War scenario (601.0) as follows:

(6WC.21) LDR USAGE: The LDR are played independently. The LDR use the Dockyard rules found in this issue of *Captain's Log* which details many aspects of LDR usage.

(6WC.22) HYDRAN MOBILIZATION: The scenario speculates that Hydran spies learned of the new secret alliance between the LDR and the Coalition. The Kingdom then began a rapid mobilization. On Turn #2 the Hydrans are at full wartime mobilization, but are not at war with any empire. This is a unique exception to several rules due to the Kingdom's emergency war plans. During Turn #2, there are no restrictions on the Hydrans except that they cannot leave their territory and only the First Fleet and new production units can leave their deployment zone. The Hydrans on Turn #2 can build and convert ships (as well as non-ship units such as an FRD), use accelerated or overproduction, accumulate economic points, activate ships, receive and buy command points, raise and buy prime teams, and do anything else that an empire "at war" can do. Only the First Fleet is released, so the only units that can move within Hydran territory are new production units and their First Fleet.

(6WC.3) SCENARIO SCHEDULE CHANGES

(6WC.31) TURN #2, SPRING Y169

(6WC.311) Events: (601.2). The Hydrans begin mobilization.

(6WC.312) Forces Released: As per (601.2).

Hydran: The Hydran First Fleet is released but must remain within Hydran territory.

(6WC.32) TURN #3, FALL Y169

(6WC.321) Events: The Hydrans may attack the Coalition. The Hydrans are not required to attack. If the Hydrans do not attack, released Coalition forces are available against the Kzintis.

(6WC.322) Forces Released:

COALITION: As per (602.1) plus all LDR forces are released.

KZINTI: All except for the six designated ships of the Marquis Fleet.

HYDRAN: All including the Old Colonies Fleet.

(6WC.33) TURN #4, SPRING Y170

(6WC.331) Forces Released: As per above; the Klingon Eastern Fleet is not released.

(6WC.332) Events: Coalition can attack Hydrans and/or Kzintis.

(6WC.34) TURN #5, FALL Y170 – TURN #6, SPRING Y171:

Same as Turn #4.

(6WC.35) TURN #7, FALL Y170 – SCENARIO END: As per (602.2) and beyond.

(6WC.36) SCENARIO CONCLUSION: The scenario ends per (605.3).

(6WC.4) FORCES AVAILABLE

(6WC.41) EMPLOYMENT. Forces released may move anywhere in that empire's territory and in the territory of an empire with which they are at war.

(6WC.42) LDR FORCES: Per (714.0) found in *CL#46*.

(6WC.5) RESOURCES AND LOGISTICS

(6WC.51) ECONOMICS. Use historical levels for all empires as per (652.3).

(6WC.511) Economic Independence. The LDR runs as a separate economy. The LDR goes to war and changes economic levels independent of the other Coalition partners.

(6WC.512) Exhaustion. Per historical rates; consider the LDR to be at an "at war" level beginning Turn #1.

(6WC.52) TRANSFER OF FUNDS. Transfers of economic points between the Coalition and the LDR must be done via (435.0).

(6WC.53) TRADE. The LDR conducts trade independent of the Lyrans.

(6WC.531) WYN Trade Rights. The LDR may trade with the WYN using (449.12).

(6WC.532) WYN Ship Sales. The LDR may not sell ships to the WYN.

(6WC.54) SPECIAL RESOURCES

(6WC.541) Supply. LDR warships may only draw supplies from their own supply grid; all LDR auxiliary ships may only draw supply within three hexes of an LDR supply point. The LDR cannot use an expeditionary force under (411.70).

(6WC.542) Lyran Supply. Lyran forces (only) can draw supply from and through LDR supply points.

(6WC.543) LDR Attrition Units: Like the Lyrans, the LDR used Klingon fighters. LDR fighters are interchangeable with the Klingons and the Lyrans. The Lyrans may purchase replacement PFs for the LDR if their supply grids are connected. However LDR and Lyran PFs are not interchangeable in the field.

(6WC.55) PRODUCTION

(6WC.551) General. All LDR production notes and other data are outlined in (714.0) in *CL#46*.

(6WC.552) Lyran Conversions. The LDR may send their warships to the Lyrans to be converted to LDR variants based on the hull sent. The Lyrans also donate ships to the LDR but they cannot be used by the LDR until they are converted to LDR use at an LDR conversion facility; see the LDR SIT for conversion costs.

(6WC.553) LDR Construction Schedule. See (714.0) in *CL#46*.

(6WC.554) **Pods.** The LDR, Lyran, and Klingon pods are interchangeable unless otherwise restricted.

(6WC.6) VICTORY CONDITIONS

Same as (603.3).

DESIGN NOTES

This variant seems to always come up in conversations at Origins. Players are intrigued by the LDR “rock” in the playing field of the General War and seem to enjoy the speculation of “what if” the LDR did join the Coalition and how could it be balanced. Hopefully in this case we succeeded. Let us know so we can update this scenario for the upcoming Civil Wars module.

Players can also use it as a training module for new players that can be overwhelmed by the level of detail needed to run a large empire such as the Klingons. The LDR is small enough to get wet with *F&E* without drowning.

OTHER SCENARIO IDEAS

WHAT AM I BID?

At the start of Turn #3, the Lyran and Hydran players each prepare a written bid for the loyalty of the LDR. This is done secretly and in writing and the records are revealed simultaneously. Both empires lose the EPs they bid, which are added to the LDR treasury. If the Hydran bid exceeds the Lyran bid, the LDR become Hydran allies. If the Hydran bid exceeds 50% of the Lyran bid, the LDR are neutral. If the Hydran bid is 50% or less than the Lyran bid, the LDR are treated as a Lyran ally.

SHORT SCENARIO: LYRAN CIVIL WAR

There are two players. One controls the Enemy’s Blood fleet, the other controls the LDR and whatever ally the LDR has managed to recruit. This could be:

Two-thirds of the total combat power of the Foremost Fleet, counted in terms of attack factors.

Klingon Southern Reserve Fleet.

Hydran Expeditionary Fleet.

Each player can enter only his own and LDR territory and the neutral zone hexes there between.

NEW SHIPS FOR *F&E*

While complete descriptions of the new ships in this issue are in the Shipyard section (please refer there for data in depth), this is a quick summary for *F&E* players.

Lyran Light Cruisers: Four variants of the long-ignored CL hull are included: scout, commando, escort, and carrier.

Federation DDX2: An alternate design for the DDX, rejected in the design competition but now available to players.

Kzinti DWVP: The first of a new class of picket carriers, these are war destroyers with a full fighter squadron but almost no offensive weapons of their own. Eventually, every empire will have a ship of this type. Well, almost.

Ships for the LDR: The SSDs for two unbuilt transports, the FFT and DWT, are included in this issue and the data for them is here. Two other ships listed here (but not in the *SFB* section) are LDR auxiliary cruisers needed by the LDR rules.

Klingon Stasis Dreadnoughts: The C10A is a new ship for *F&E*. The C5A was already published for *F&E* in *Strategic Operations* but is repeated here since the *SFB* SSD is here.

Designation	SFB Ref #	Factors On Counter	Product	Cmdnd (754.0)	Date Avail	Base Hull; Size (755.0)	Conversion Cost, Source	Build Cost or Substitution	Salvage (439.0)	Notes and Special Cases; EW, Shock
Fed DDX(2)	A34	10-9/5	TBD	6	Y181	DD(4)	From NCL: NA	For NCL: 9.5	2.375	X-Ship§
Klingon C10A	103A	12-14A/7	TBD	10	Y179	C8(2)	From C10: 3	Must Convert	5.400	Stasis Heavy Variant
Klingon C5A	104A	9-11AF/6	AO	9	Y176	C5(2)	From C5: 3	Must Convert	4.2	Stasis Fast Variant
Kzinti DWVP	A17	4-6(6)/2-3(3)	TBD	5	Y178	DW(4)	From DW: 2+12	For DW: 6+12	1.0000	Medium Carrier
Lyran CLV	A20	5-6(4)/3(2)	TBD	6	Y169	CL(3)	From DWV: 1+4	For CL: 7+8	1.500	Light Carrier
Lyran CLE	A21	6■/3■	TBD	6	Y171	CL(3)	From CL: 1	For CL: 7+8	1.500	Large Escort§
Lyran CLS	A22	2-6♦/1-3	TBD	6	Y159	CL(3)	From CL: 3	For CL: 9	1.500	Scout§; EW=3
Lyran CLG	A23	2-6G/1-3G	TBD	6	Y137	CL(3)	From CL: 2	For CL: 6	1.500	Commando Variant§
LDR FFT	A5	2-4U/0-2	TBD	3	Y166	FF(4)	From FF: 1	For FF: 2.5	0.625	Theater Transport, Carry 4 EPs
LDR DWT	A6	4-6U/2-3	TBD	5	Y166	DW(4)	From DW: 1 From FF: 3†	For DW: 4	1.000	Theater Transport, Carry 5 EPs
LDR SAA	1.2	2/1	TBD	1	Y149	SAux(4)	From FFT: 3	For AuxPod: 2	0.500	Small Auxiliary Ship
LDR LAA	1.21	4/2	TBD	2	Y149	LAux(3)	None	For 2xAuxPod: 4	1.000	Large Armed Auxiliary Ship

SHIPYARD REPORT

UNITED FEDERATION

(R2.A34) DDX(2) ADVANCED DESTROYER [DDX(2)]: This was a competing design with the Advanced Destroyer which actually entered service. It was an effort to simplify and streamline the production of advanced technology ships by using a single engine type for both the heavy cruiser and destroyer designs. The fact that limits on the construction of heavy cruiser engines had previously led to the curtailment of construction of the pre-war destroyer was believed to be something that could be avoided. So much new technology was being stuffed into the hulls of the advanced ships that it was believed engine construction would actually surpass the number of cruisers that could be built.

In the end, however, it was found that a single cruiser engine, even an advanced technology one, simply did not provide enough power to make the DDX2 design workable. The final nail in the coffin of the design was when the pre-war AWR refit was applied to bring its power on par with the warp output of the engines on the DDX Advanced Destroyer. The designers of the Advanced Destroyer simply incorporated the same refit into their own design. There being no way to further increase the available power generation in the DDX2's small hull, this competing design fell by the wayside.

It is possible a single prototype was constructed, but existing records appear to indicate that it never went beyond a design study. Other sources indicate that one DDX2 was converted into a standard DDX, perhaps before it was complete.

Refits: None.

Names: None, ship was apparently never built.

SSD is in *Captain's Log #46*; use any available Federation DD or DDX counter.

Proposed by John Trauger.

KLINGON EMPIRE

(R3.103A) C10A HEAVY STASIS DREADNOUGHT (C10A): This is a ship that was described in *Module R7*, although no SSD was provided at that time. The Klingons never built a ship of this type (leaving the SFG duty to a C9A) but could have produced one at any time from Y179 onward. The design would have replaced the two forward drone racks with the SFG; the SFG would be destroyed by two phaser hits.

UIM: Two modules standard. Backups available (S3.2).

Refits: Mech-link refit in Y178.

Names: None, ship was never built.

SSD is in *Captain's Log #46*; use any available Klingon C10 counter.

(R3.104A) C5A LIGHT STASIS DREADNOUGHT (C5A): This is a ship that was described in *Module R7*, although no SSD was provided at that time. The C5 *Commander Kurt* was refitted with an SFG in Y176, becoming a deadly raider. The SFG replaced the two forward drone racks and took two phaser hits to destroy.

UIM: Two modules standard. Backups available (S3.2).

Refits: Mech-link refit in Y178.

Names: *Commander Kurt*.

SSD is in *Captain's Log #46*; use any available Klingon C5 counter.

KZINTI HEGEMONY

(R5.A17) PICKET CARRIER (DWVP): As the General War ground on and the demand for more and better ships accelerated, the various admiralties looked for ways to at least maintain a presence in quieter regions. One answer to this was the patrol carrier class, but even these ships were quickly pulled into the crucible of near-direct combat rather than their function of "patrolling" a less intense area to maintain a presence. While police carriers could pick up some of the slack, the police had their own jobs to do (when not dragooned into the fighting) and could not always divert the ships needed to maintain a presence.

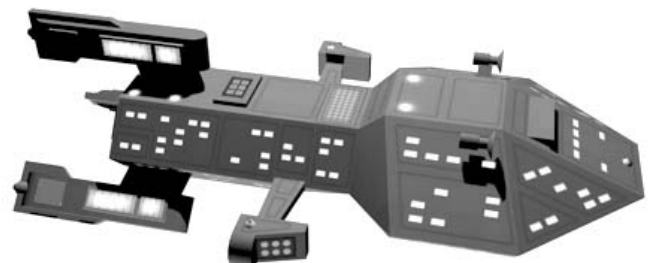
One of the answers was to return to the concept of the patrol carrier, but step down to an even smaller, more fragile (and more expendable) hull. A full fighter squadron was deemed the minimum necessary to maintain a presence, so a war destroyer was gutted of heavy weapons and other systems and its shuttle bay greatly expanded to provide room for a full squadron. Every empire experimented with this concept; the Kzintis actually built at least five ships.

The Kzinti design sacrificed its disruptors in order to provide more ordnance (drones) to keep its fighters in operation. Because it might face a marauding Klingon raider (where anti-drones would be a useful defense) or a Lyran raider (where anti-drones would be next to worthless) the Kzintis chose to arm the class with expensive type-G drone racks. However as they expected the ships to avoid direct combat whenever possible, they did not increase the number of seeking weapon control channels available on the basic war destroyer design.

The most common use for the ship was to provide reinforcement for a colony or convoy that might be raided. Ships of this type also operated on the flanks of major fleet operations using their fighters to provide a screen against a possible raid into the rear. Far more often larger carriers would strip the picket carriers of their fighters (and munitions) in order to sustain their own operations, making the class little more than very expensive fast carrier resupply ships.

While the class remained in service well into the Andromedan War, they were largely supplanted by fast patrol ship tenders, which were more effective in the role.

Year	Escorts	Fighters
Y178-180	AFF or none	12xTAAS or 6xLKF
Y181-184	AFF/FKA or none	12xTADS or 6xLKF
Y185+	AFF/FKA/DWA or none	12xTADSC or 6xLKF



This ship is a “true carrier” and could have carried an MRS shuttle if one were available, but ships of this type were near the very bottom of the priority list for such a shuttle.

This ship has one shuttle bay.

Refits: The Y175 refit was included in the design. The mech-link refit was available, rarely installed, from Y182. Two ships that had such a refit carried fi-con PFs, not for strikes, but to move the fighters forward to larger carriers.

Names: None known.

Other data: Fighter drone storage of 150 spaces.

This ship can control a number of seeking weapons equal to its sensor rating.

SSD is in *Captain's Log #46*; use any available Kzinti DW counter.

Proposed by Michael C. Grafton.

LYRAN EMPIRE

While popular wisdom is that every Lyran light cruiser was converted into a battlecruiser, the reality is that this class did remain in service until the end of the General War, and some of them were converted into specialized support variants.

(R11.A20) PANTHER-V LIGHT CARRIER (CLV): Records indicate that only one ship of this design, *Blue Nebula*, was actually built by the Lyran Empire. The design was created as part of the development of Lyran fighter doctrine and attempted to retain the full firepower of a light cruiser while adding as many fighters as possible. This was clearly influenced by the earlier local defense carrier (R11.80) design. The resulting Panther-V design was found to have too few fighters to be worth the effort of actually fielding such ships, and the design was simply one of several pre-war carrier experiments.

The Panther-V was a competitor to another Lyran carrier design, the *Meteor Storm* (R11.109), which had traded the ship's offensive weapons in exchange for the maximum number of embarked fighters.

The *Blue Nebula* was lost in combat with the Hydrans before the Lyrans entered the General War. The design was not repeated (it could have been at any time) because of other demands for the shrinking supply of light cruisers. (War cruisers had taken over most of the light cruiser construction budget.)

This design did influence the later Hellcat battle carrier and battle control ship designs, with the systems in the light cruiser portions left intact in favor of establishing fighter bays in the larger center module. More importantly, the design influenced the *Red Claw Glory* (R11.12) and other later large carriers by demonstrating that it was possible to retain offensive weapons and operate fighters, but that a larger platform was needed. The result was that most small Lyran carriers [Mobile Carrier (R11.57) and Light Carrier (R11.22)] would have few, if any, heavy weapons [the Police Carrier (R11.84) and Medium Carrier (R11.70) designs being exceptions], but larger Lyran carriers tended to retain their heavy weapons and operate full squadrons of fighters.

While Lyran records indicate no more Panther-Vs were built, there were reports of such a carrier being encountered during the General War, but later analysis revealed that ship was actually a JagdPanther (R11.61) operating fighters from its modular bay.

Fighter and escort data is provided below for players to experiment with using ships of this class in their campaigns.

Year	Escorts	Fighters
Y169-170	CL, FFE	8xZ-2
Y171-173	CWE, FFE	8xZ-2
Y173-174	CWE, DWE or FFE	8xZ-2
Y175	CWA, DWA or FFA	8xZ-V
Y176-178	CWA, DWA or FFA	8xZ-V

Y179-180	CWA, DWA or FFA	or 4xZ-K 8xZ-Y or 4xZ-KB
Y181-184	CWA, DWA	8xZ-YB or 4xZ-KB
Y184+	CWA, DWA	8xZ-YC or 4xZ-KB

This ship is a “true carrier” and could have carried an MRS shuttle if one were available.

This ship has two shuttle bays; no transfers are possible.

Known Names: *Blue Nebula*.

This ship can control a number of seeking weapons equal to its sensor rating.

UIM: Available for purchase from Y170.

Refits: This design could have included the ESG capacitor and Plus refits. The phaser refit was not included in the original design, but might have been installed shortly after the ship entered service. The mech-link refit would probably have been installed in Y178.

Other data: Fighter drone storage of 100 spaces.

SSD is in *Captain's Log #46*; use any available Lyran light cruiser counter.

(R11.A21) PANTHER-E LIGHT ESCORT CRUISER (CLE): This ship was designed at the same time as the CWE (R11.24) to serve as a large escort for the carriers of the *Red Claw Glory* class (R11.12). One ship is known to have been built and there are unconfirmed reports of a second (which might have been a JagdPanther modular cruiser).

There is no definitive statement of such a ship being encountered escorting any Lyran carrier in combat with either the Hydrans or Kzintis. It is probable that the diversion of the limited light cruiser fleet into the battlecruiser design prevented any hulls being made available for conversion to this design.

The design included limited aegis.

Known Names: *Slashmaster*.

This ship can control a number of seeking weapons equal to its sensor rating.

UIM: not available.

Refits: This design included the ESG capacitor, Plus, and phaser refits. The mech-link refit would probably have been installed in Y178 had the ship survived.

SSD is in *Captain's Log #46*; use any available Lyran light cruiser counter.

(R11.A21A) PANTHER-A LIGHT AEGIS CRUISER (CLA): Had any Panther-Es survived that long, they would probably have been converted to full aegis in Y175.

Known Names: None.

This ship can control a number of seeking weapons equal to its sensor rating.

UIM: not available.

Refits: This design included the ESG capacitor, Plus, and phaser refits. The mech-link refit would probably have been installed in Y178.

SSD is in *Captain's Log #46*; use any available Lyran light cruiser counter.

(R11.A22) PANTHER-S LIGHT SCOUT CRUISER (CLS): During the Four Powers War the Lyrans converted two or three light cruisers to this design in an effort to enhance their edge in electronic warfare. The Lyran Leopard-class scouts gave them an edge in power over the Hydran Hunter-class scout and the Kzinti frigate-class scout. The original intention was to deploy one ship to each front with the third ship available to replace a lost or damaged ship or to supplement a major offensive effort.

Things did not work out as planned.

The *Eye of the Red Sun*, the first ship of the class, was dis-

patched to support operations by the Enemy's Blood Duchy but succumbed to an Orion raid against the convoy it was traveling with before it could join the task force whose operations it was to support. *Finder of Foes* was damaged in its first engagement with the Kzintis and required major repairs, leading to the decision to send *Challenger of the Dark* to that front. By the time repairs had been completed to *Finder of Foes*, *Challenger of the Dark* had been destroyed by an overwhelming Kzinti drone strike.

With the loss of *Challenger of the Dark* and *Eye of the Red Sun*, the Lyrans decided that the ships were simply too tempting as targets to make effective scouts. Indeed, *Finder of Foes* was lost with all hands in combat against the Hydrans in Y161. The Lyran Empire would revisit the concept of large scouts in the early Y170s (borrowing the war cruiser scout design from the Lyran Democratic Republic) after being impressed by the Klingon use of D6S heavy scout cruisers.

Special sensors are destroyed on "torpedo" damage points.

Known Names: *Eye of the Red Sun*, *Finder of Foes*, and *Challenger of the Dark*.

UIM: not available.

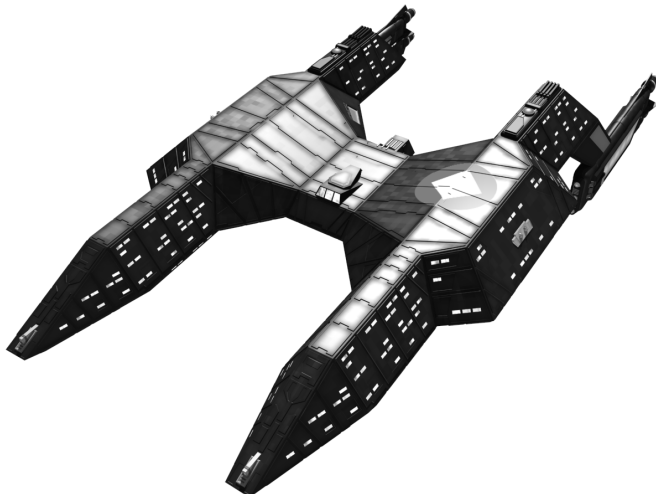
Refits: Historically no ship of this class survived long enough to be refitted. If the class had remained in service, it would have received the ESG capacitor refit in Y167, the Plus refit in Y168, and mech-link refit in Y179. They would probably never have received the phaser refit.

SSD is in *Captain's Log #46*; use any available Lyran light cruiser counter.

(R11.A23) PANTHER-G LIGHT COMMANDO CRUISER (CLG):

Finding the commando destroyer (R11.55) sometimes inadequate to the task, the Lyrans built a few commando ships based on the light cruiser. The larger hull and better shielding increased the likelihood that the ship would be able to reach its objective and land its troops during intense combat operations. The larger body of troops and increased combat support facilities (shuttles and transporters) enhanced the ship's effectiveness in accomplishing raids against defended targets where Marines on standard warships were not adequate. The ships served well into the Four Powers War, but aggressive use caused unsustainable losses, and by Y160 none remained in service. Production of commando destroyers continued through the Four Powers War because the ships were cheaper and the available light cruiser hulls were being converted into the ultimately unsuccessful scout cruiser design (R11.A22).

During the Y160s there was some effort to construct or con-



vert a light cruiser to this design, but nothing came of it after the development of the war cruiser design (R11.13) led to a further curtailment in the production of light cruisers. By Y172 the needs of the General War dictated that larger commando ships were required. For a brief period reviving the Panther-G class was considered (one may have been built), but the availability of the war cruiser, with its stronger shielding and cheaper production cost, doomed the effort as much as the need to keep available light cruiser production available for conversion to battlecruisers.

Data: 36 boarding parties include two commando squads, four heavy weapons squads; three ground combat vehicles; three ground assault shuttles; one heavy transport shuttle.

Known Names: *Reaper of Souls* (Foremost County), *Claim Jumper* (Black Stripe County), *Slayer of Snakes* (Bloody Claw County), *Skinner of Kzintis* (Predator County), *Blooded Daggers* (Hidden Dagger County).

UIM: not available.

Refits: If any were still in service, they would get the ESG capacitor refit in Y167, Plus refit in Y168, and mech-link refit in Y179. This class never received the phaser refit.

SSD is in *Captain's Log #46*; use any available Lyran light cruiser counter.

LYRAN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

(R14.A5) TRANSPORT FRIGATE (FFT): Due to the small size of the Lyran Democratic Republic and the fact that most of its Merchant Marine effectively came under control of its government, there was never a real need for a strategic transport. Further, the Lyran Democratic Republic needed warships and probably could not have afforded to divert a frigate hull to this mission. When the Lyran Democratic Republic saw the war clouds of the General War gathering, concerns that their existing logistical system might be overrun led to the deployment of the military police transport corvette (R14.46) in Y169. Prior to that design, the admiralty revisited the question of whether or not they could afford to divert a frigate to the mission, but the defensive value of a frigate (which would be converted to a war destroyer while under construction) was judged too important.

The ship presented here is the design study of what such a ship might have looked like after Y166 when phaser-Gs and phaser-1s might have been installed. Prior to that date, such a ship, had the Lyran Democratic Republic operated one, would have been identical to a Lyran Empire transport frigate. Had the ship been built, it would probably have been given the name *Commission* and the military police transport corvette would never have been built. [Or the military police transport corvette would have been converted to a standard military police corvette and its crew transferred, along with the name, to the transport frigate as happened when the light tactical transport (R14.10) entered service.]

Known Names: Probably *Commission*.

UIM: not available.

Refits: ESG capacitor refit in Y169, Plus refit in Y168, and mech-link refit in Y181.

SSD is in *Captain's Log #46*; use any available Lyran Democratic Republic frigate counter.

(R14.A5) WAR DESTROYER TRANSPORT (DWT): The Lyran Democratic Republic, had it operated a transport frigate (R14.A4), would probably have upgraded it to this design as soon as they were able. Upgrading it would have taken a back seat to upgrading existing destroyers, frigates, and police corvettes to the trimaran design, but the advantages of such an upgrade would have been plain if the basic ship existed. As it was, the Lyran

Democratic Republic found that its existing logistics infrastructure, bolstered by a single military police transport corvette, was adequate to keep the General War beyond its borders until a hull could be made available for the light tactical transport design (R14.10). As such this design is merely a study as the Lyran Democratic Republic's small size prevented it from diverting a hull to this purpose, and it did not really logistically need such a ship.

Known Names: Probably *Commission*.

UIM: not available.

Refits: ESG capacitor refit in Y169, Plus refit in Y168, and mech-link refit in Y181. The ship would never have received the power pack refit as it would have interfered with its ability to move pods and pallets.

SSD is in *Captain's Log #46*; use any available Lyran Democratic Republic war destroyer counter.

QARI MECHANIZED FORCES

(R52.A1) T74 COMMANDO WAR CRUISER (T74): This ship appeared in the simulators very shortly after the T72 design. It was intended to fill out simulator forces and provided the ability to deliver a heavy battalion (in terms of size) to a planetary surface to quickly seize an objective. This would present the defending Star Fleet officers (in the simulation) with either hastily organizing their forces for a counter attack to retake the objective, or (better) successfully defend the objective from attack.

The ship's design was optimized for the mission having six transporters, two heavy shuttles, and four ground attack shuttles operating from three bays. While the ship itself could not land, it was able to quickly dispatch an impressive number of ground forces if it could reach the planet and the redundancy in its systems allowed it to sustain a landing operation in the face of considerable damage.

Data: 50 boarding parties include two commando squads, four heavy weapons squads; four ground combat vehicles; four ground assault shuttles; two heavy transport shuttles.

Known Names: None.

Refits: Mech-link refit available but not always installed in Y179 and later.

SSD is in *Captain's Log #46*; use any available Qari T72 counter.

(R52.A2) T75 WAR CRUISER MINESWEEPER (T75): This ship appeared in the simulators very shortly after the T72 design. It was optimized to fight its way through a minefield using direct-fire (phasers) weapons rather than drones, having four tractor beams and two minesweeping shuttles in addition to its single drone rack. The turret allowed most of its phasers to be brought to bear in any direction, allowing it to sweep mines off of any shield.

If it had a design flaw at all, it was that it was not as effective a minelayer as most real minesweepers based on cruiser hulls. This was deemed acceptable as its primary design purpose was to present Star Fleet Command officers with a real threat to breach the defending minefield around a base and force them to determine how to stop it.

Known Names: None.

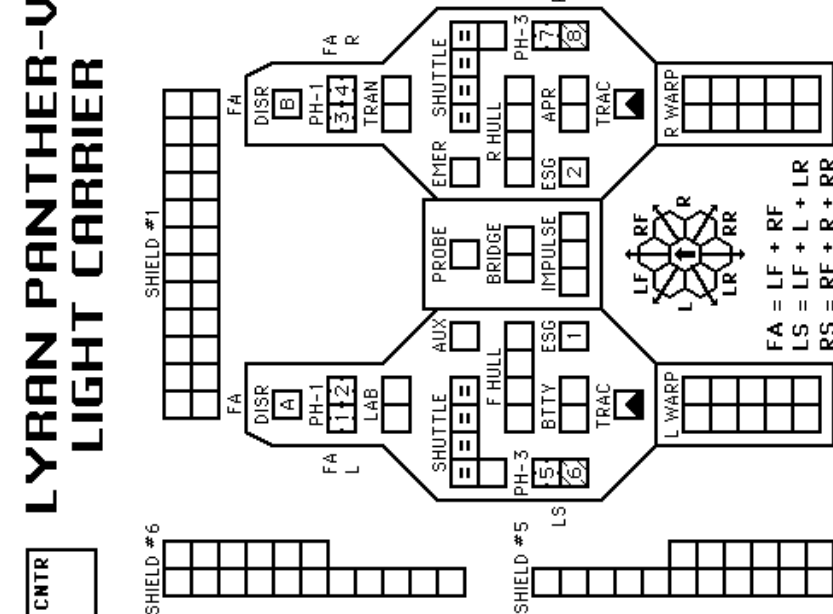
Refits: Mech-link refit available but not always installed in Y179 and later.

SSD is in *Captain's Log #46*; use any available Qari T72 counter.

Empire	Ship Type	G9.0 Crew Units	D7.0 Brdg Prts	S2.1 BPV	C6.5 Break Down	C2.12 Move Cost	J1.42 Spare Shuttles	R0.6 Size Class	C3.3 Turn Mode	Rule Number	Year In Service	C13.3 Dock Points	D5.2 Explos Strength	War Ship Status	F&E Cmnd Rating	Notes
Federation	DDX(2)	30	12	140	5-6	0.50	2	4	C	A34	181	7	15	LPW	6	Conjectural, X, Y1
Klingon	C10A	60	24	258	3-6	1.50	2	2	D	103A	179	12	34	UNV	10	SFG
Klingon	C5A	50	20	232	3-6	1.25	2	2	D	104A	176	12	28	LPW	9	F, SFG
Kzinti	DWVP	28	4	99/74	5-6	0.50	1+2	4	B	A17	178	5	10	RPW	4	V
Lyran	CLV	36	7	104	5-6	0.67	1+2	3	C	A20	169	6	12	RPU	6	V, Y1
Lyran	CLE	32	7	99	5-6	0.67	1	3	C	A21	171	6	12	RPL	6	E, LA
Lyran	CLA	32	7	110	5-6	0.67	1	3	C	A21A	175	6	12	RP2	6	E, A
Lyran	CLS	32	7	108/86	5-6	0.67	1	3	C	A22	159	6	12	RP3	6	◆
Lyran	CLG	39	36	94/82	5-6	0.67	1	3	C	A23	137	6	12	RPW	6	T
LDR	FFT	18	4	76/55	6	0.33†	1	4	A/D	A5	166	4+2	7	LPW	3	TG, Y1, Conjectural
LDR	DWT	27	6	102/80	6	0.50†	1	4	A/D	A6	170	5+2	10	LPW	5	TG, Y1, Conjectural
Qari	T74	46	50	115/85	5-6	0.67	1	3	B	A1	166	6	13	RPW	6	T
Qari	T75	36	10	105/90	5-6	0.67	1	3	B	A2	166	6	13	RPL	6	MS

LYRAN PANTHER-U LIGHT CARRIER

YS: 169
DK: 6
EX: 12
CR: 6



SHIP DATA TABLE	
TYPE	= CLV
POINT VALUE	= 104
BREAKDOWN	= 5-6
SHIELD COST	= 1+1
LIFE SUPPORT	= 1
SIZE CLASS	= 3
REFERENCE	= R11.A20
UIM REFIT (Y170)	= +5
PHASER REFIT (Y170)	= +4
MECH-LINK REFIT (Y178)	= +2

HIT & RUN UIM

TURN MODE	SPEED
C 1	2-4
2	5-9
3	10-14
4	15-20
5	21-27
6	28+

ADMINISTRATIVE SHUTTLES	
IDENT	HIT POINTS
	A A
	A A
	A A

TWO BAYS, NO (J1.59) TRANSFERS.

HIT POINTS MARKED AS "A" ARE ONLY USED WHEN OPERATING ADVANCED SHUTTLES AFTER Y179: SEE (J17.0) IN MODULE J2.

TRANSPORTER BOMBS	
	D D D D

CREW UNITS	
IDENT	HIT POINTS
*	10
	20
	30

BOARDING PARTIES	
	7

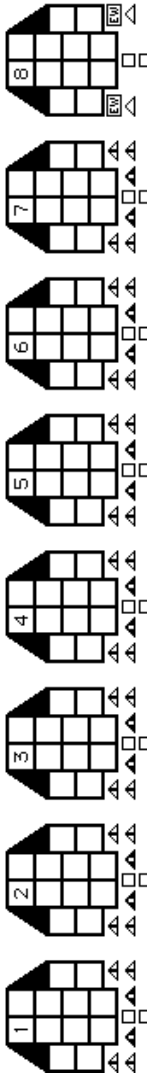
DECK CREWS	
	8

TYPE I OFFENSIVE PHASER TABLE												
DIE RANGE	6-9-16-26-51-ROLL	0	1	2	3	4	5	8	15	25	50	75
1	9	8	7	6	5	5	4	3	2	1	1	1
2	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	0	0	0
3	7	5	4	4	4	3	1	0	0	0	0	0
4	6	4	4	4	4	3	2	0	0	0	0	0
5	5	4	4	4	3	3	1	0	0	0	0	0
6	4	4	3	3	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0

TYPE III DEFENSE PHASER							
DIE RANGE	4-9-ROLL	0	1	2	3	8	15
1	4	4	4	3	1	1	0
2	4	4	4	2	1	0	0
3	4	4	4	1	0	0	0
4	4	4	3	0	0	0	0
5	4	3	2	0	0	0	0
6	3	3	1	0	0	0	0

EXPANDING SPHERE TABLE					
RADIUS	ENERGY				
1	2	3	4	5	
0 (4.00)	4	8	12	16	20
1 (3.67)	4	7	11	15	18
2 (3.33)	3	7	10	13	17
3 (3.00)	3	6	9	12	15

DISRUPTOR TABLE							
RANGE	0	1	2	3-4	5-8	9-15	16-22
HIT (STD)	NA	1-5	1-5	1-4	1-4	1-4	1-3
HIT (UIM)	NA	1-5	1-5	1-4	1-4	1-4	1-4
HIT (OVERLOAD)	1-6	1-5	1-5	1-4	1-4	NA	NA
HIT (OL/UIM)	1-6	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5	NA	NA
DAMAGE, STD	0	5	4	4	3	3	2
DAMAGE, OULD	10	10	8	8	6	0	0

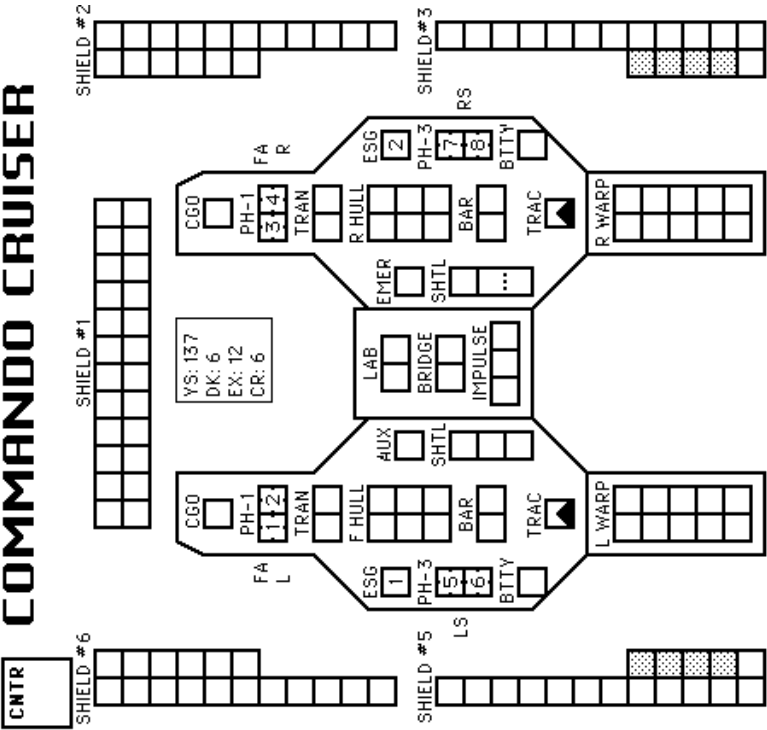


WARP ENERGY MOVEMENT COST = 2/3 ENERGY POINT PER HEX [5] = HET COST [6] = ERRATIC MANEUVER WARP COST

SPEED	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Standard	1	2	3	4	4	5	6	6	7	8	9	10	10	11	12	12	13	14	14	15	16	16	17	18	18	19	20	20	20	
Fract.	2/3	1/3	2	2 2/3	3 1/3	4	4 2/3	5 1/3	6	6 2/3	7 1/3	8	8 2/3	9 1/3	10	10 2/3	11 1/3	12	12 2/3	13 1/3	14	14 2/3	15 1/3	16	16 2/3	17 1/3	18	18 2/3	19 1/3	20

[6] SHADED PHASER-3 BOXES CONVERTED TO PHASER-1S BY THE CLY'S PHASER REFIT.

LYRAN PANTHER-G LIGHT COMMANDO CRUISER



SHIP DATA TABLE

TYPE = CLG
 POINT VALUE = 94/82
 BREAKDOWN = 5-6
 SHIELD COST = 1+1
 LIFE SUPPORT = 1
 SIZE CLASS = 3
 REFERENCE = R11.A23

PRIOR TO Y167: NO ESG
 CAPACITORS = -2

PLUS REFIT (Y168) = +2
 MECH-LINK REFIT (Y179) = +2

TURN MODE SPEED

C	1	2-4
2	5-9	
3	10-14	
4	15-20	
5	21-27	
6	28+	

EXPANDING SPHERE TABLE

RADIUS	ENERGY	1	2	3	4	5
0	(4.00)	4	8	12	16	20
1	(3.67)	4	7	11	15	18
2	(3.33)	3	7	10	13	17
3	(3.00)	3	6	9	12	15

ADMINISTRATIVE SHUTTLES

IDENT	HIT POINTS	NOTES
		A
		A
		A GAS
		A GAS
		A GAS
		A HTS
		A
		A

TWO BAYS, NO (J159) TRANSFERS.

HIT POINTS MARKED AS "A" ARE ONLY USED WHEN OPERATING ADVANCED SHUTTLES AFTER Y179; SEE (J17.0) IN MODULE J2.

TRANSPORTER BOMBS
 D D D D D

CREW UNITS

*	10
	20
	30

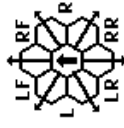
BOARDING PARTIES

	10
	20
	30

BARRACKS ARE DESTROYED ON "FORWARD HULL" AND "REAR HULL" DAMAGE POINTS.

TYPE I OFFENSIVE PHASER TABLE

DIE RANGE	6-	9-	16-	26-	51-						
ROLL 0	1	2	3	4	5	8	15	25	50	75	
1	9	8	7	6	5	5	4	3	2	1	1
2	8	7	6	5	5	4	3	2	1	1	0
3	7	5	5	4	4	3	1	0	0	0	0
4	6	4	4	4	3	2	0	0	0	0	0
5	5	4	4	4	3	3	1	0	0	0	0
6	4	4	3	3	2	2	0	0	0	0	0



FA = LF + RF
 LS = LF + L + LR
 RS = RF + R + RR

TYPE III DEFENSE PHASER

DIE RANGE	4-	9-			
ROLL 0	1	2	3	8	15
1	4	4	3	1	1
2	4	4	2	1	0
3	4	4	1	0	0
4	4	3	0	0	0
5	4	3	0	0	0
6	3	3	1	0	0

WARP ENERGY MOVEMENT COST = 2/3 ENERGY POINT PER HEX [5] = HET COST [6] = ERRATIC MANEUVER WARP COST

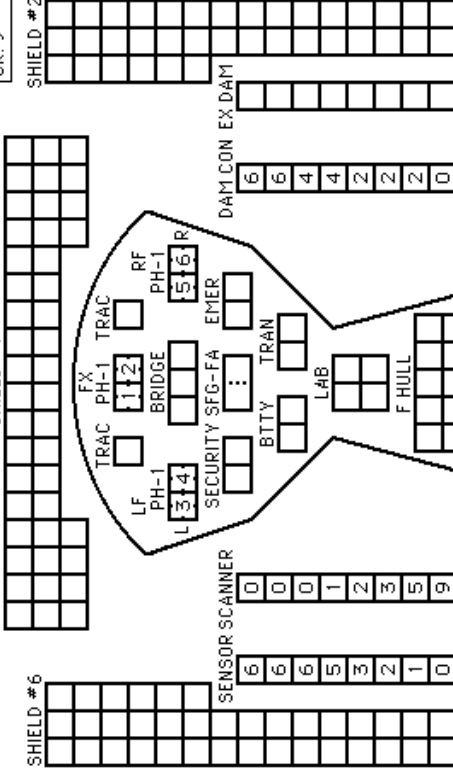
SPEED	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Standard	1	2	2	3	4	4	5	6	6	7	8	8	9	10	10	11	12	12	13	14	14	15	16	16	17	18	18	19	20	20
Fract.	2/3	1 1/3	2	2 2/3	3 1/3	4	4 2/3	5 1/3	6	6 2/3	7 1/3	8	8 2/3	9 1/3	10	10 2/3	11 1/3	12	12 2/3	13 1/3	14	14 2/3	15 1/3	16	16 2/3	17 1/3	18	18 2/3	19 1/3	20

SHADED BOXES ARE ADDED BY THE CLG'S PLUS REFIT.

KLINGON C5A LIGHT STASIS DREADNOUGHT

YS: 176
DK: 12
EX: 28
CR: 9

CNTR



SEE (D2.33) FOR SPECIAL WING PHASER ARCS.

FA = LF + RF
FX = L + LF + RF + R

TYPE	=	C5A
POINT VALUE	=	232
BREAKDOWN	=	3-6
SHIELD COST	=	1+3
LIFE SUPPORT	=	1+1/2
SIZE CLASS	=	2
REFERENCE	=	R3.104A

2 X UIM STANDARD

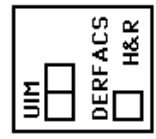
THIS SHIP INCLUDED TYPE-B DRONE RACKS WITH DOUBLE LOADS IN ITS DESIGN. IT CAN LAUNCH ONE DRONE FROM EACH RACK EACH TURN.

D	1	2-4
HET	3	9-12
BD	4	13-17
5	18-24	
6	25+	

1	
2	

RANGE	0	1	2	3	4+
HIT#	-	1-2	1-3	1-4	-

SEE (G16.52) FOR DAMAGE TO STASIS FIELD GENERATOR.



IDENT	HIT POINTS	NOTES
	A	A
	A	A
	A	A
	A	A
	A	A
	A	A
	A	A

TWO BAYS, NO (J1.59) TRANSFERS.
HIT POINTS MARKED AS "A" ARE ONLY USED WHEN OPERATING ADVANCED SHUTTLES AFTER Y179: SEE (J17.0) IN MODULE J2.

10
20
30
40
50

5

MINES MAY NOT BE LAID FROM THE BOOM SHUTTLE BAY (M2.113).

	D	D	D	D	D	D
--	---	---	---	---	---	---

DIE ROLL	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	9	16	26	51-75
1	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	1
2	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	1	0	0
3	7	5	4	4	4	3	1	0	0	0	0
4	6	4	4	4	4	3	2	0	0	0	0
5	5	4	4	4	3	3	1	0	0	0	0
6	4	4	3	3	2	2	0	0	0	0	0

DIE ROLL	0	1	2	3	8	15
1	4	4	4	3	1	1
2	4	4	4	2	1	0
3	4	4	4	1	0	0
4	4	4	3	0	0	0
5	4	3	2	0	0	0
6	3	3	1	0	0	0

THE ANTI-DRONE RACK ALWAYS HAD 12 ROUNDS.

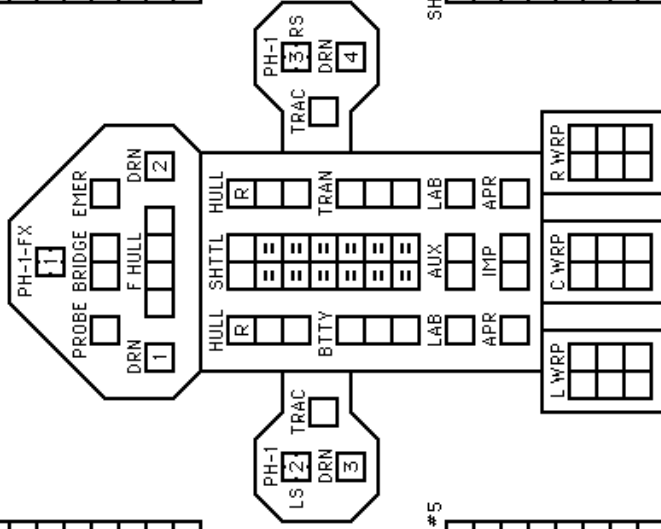
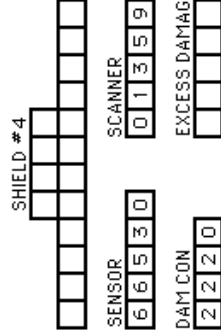
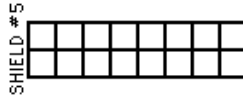
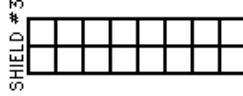
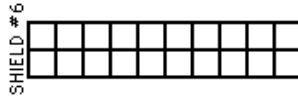
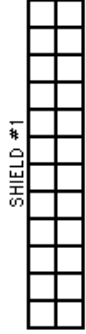
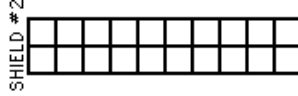
RANGE	0	1	2	3-4	5-8	9-15	16-22	23-30	31-40
HIT (STD)	NA	1-5	1-4	1-4	1-4	1-4	1-3	1-2	1-2
HIT (UIM)	NA	1-5	1-4	1-4	1-4	1-4	1-4	1-2	1-2
HIT (DERFACS)	NA	1-5	1-4	1-4	1-4	1-3	1-3	1-2	1-2
HIT (OVERLOAD)	1-6	1-5	1-4	1-4	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
HIT (OL/UIM)	1-6	1-5	1-5	1-5	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
DAMAGE, STD	0	5	4	4	3	3	2	2	1
DAMAGE, OULD	10	10	8	8	6	0	0	0	0

SPEED	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Standard	2	3	4	5	7	8	9	10	12	13	14	15	17	18	19	20	22	23	24	25	27	28	29	30	32	33	34	35	37	38
Fract.	1/4	2 1/2	3 3/4	5	6 1/4	7 1/2	8 3/4	10	11 1/4	12 1/2	13 3/4	15	16 1/4	17 1/2	18 3/4	20	21 1/4	22 1/2	23 3/4	25	26 1/4	27 1/2	28 3/4	30	31 1/4	32 1/2	33 3/4	35	36 1/4	37 1/2

KZINTI PICKET CARRIER

YS: 178
DK: 5
EX: 10
CR: 4

CNTR



ADMINISTRATIVE SHUTTLES table with columns: IDENT, HIT POINTS, NOTES

HIT POINTS MARKED AS "A" ARE ONLY USED WHEN OPERATING ADVANCED SHUTTLES AFTER Y179: SEE (JT7.0) IN MODULE J2.

CREW UNITS grid

BOARDING PARTIES table with columns: 4, 10

DECK CREWS grid

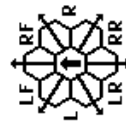
PROBES table with columns: 5, 10

ANTI-DRONE TABLE with columns: RANGE 0 1 2 3 4+, HIT# - 1-2 1-3 1-4 -

TYPE I OFFENSIVE PHASER TABLE with columns: DIE RANGE, ROLL 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 15 20 25 30 40 45 50 55 60 65 70 75

TURN MODE SPEED table with columns: B, 1 2-5, 2 6-10, 3 11-15, 4 16-21, 5 22-28, 6 29+

DRONE RACKS table with columns: 1 G, 2 G, 3 G, 4 G



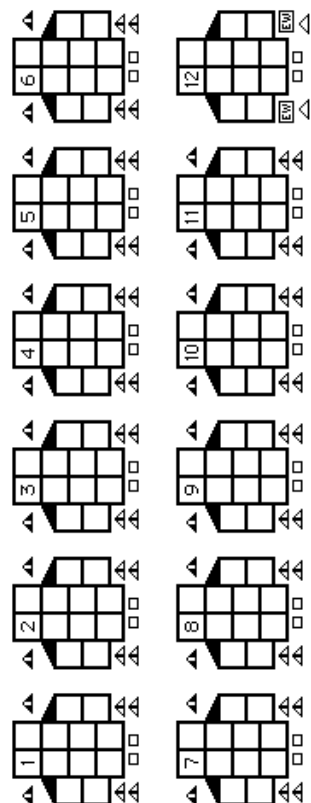
LS = LF + L + LR
RS = RF + R + RR
FX = L + LF + RF + R

RACKS ALWAYS HAD THREE RELOADS. ONE RELOAD IS ENTIRELY ADDS.

TYPE III DEFENSE PHASER table with columns: DIE RANGE, ROLL 0 1 2 3 4 5 6

TADSC FIGHTERS
2XPH-3-FA
DFR = 4
CRIPPLED = 8
SPEED = 15
BPV = 12

TAAS-E FIGHTER
2XPH-3-FA
DFR = 4
CRIPPLED = 8
SPEED = 15
BPV = 11



WARP ENERGY MOVEMENT COST = 1/2 ENERGY POINT PER HEX

WARP ENERGY MOVEMENT COST = 1/2 ENERGY POINT PER HEX table with columns: SPEED 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30

[5] = HET COST [6] = ERRATIC MANEUVER WARP COST

ROMULAN SKYHAWK-L DESTROYER LEADER

SQUADRON SCALE

This ship has no probe launcher.

POWER TRACK +30

FRACTIONAL POWER 0 1/2

COUNTER	SKL	
POINT VALUE: 124		
DAMAGE CONTROL: 2		

RIS Name _____

CLOAK COST	= 1	
TURN MODE A		
MOVE COST 1/2		
BASE SPEED 8		
TURN MODE 1		
SPEED COST 4		
BASE SPEED 16		
TURN MODE 2		
SPEED COST 8		
BASE SPEED 24		
TURN MODE 4		
SPEED COST 12		
ACCELERATION		
COST 1/2		
DECELERATION		
COST 1/2		
HIGH ENERGY		
TURN COST		
2+1/2		
EVASIVE		
MANEUVER		
COST 3		

WEAPONS USED	A	B	C	1	2	3
	4	5	6	7	8	

PLASMA ARMING: A, B, C

FEDERATION COMMANDER: CAPTAIN'S LOG #46
 SQUADRON SCALE SHIP CARD #L461
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ROMULAN SKYHAWK-L DESTROYER LEADER

FLEET SCALE

This ship has no probe launcher.

POWER TRACK 15

FRACTIONAL POWER 0 1/4 1/2 3/4

COUNTER	SKL	
POINT VALUE: 62		
DAMAGE CONTROL: 1		

RIS Name _____

CLOAK COST	= 1/2	
TURN MODE A		
MOVE COST 1/4		
BASE SPEED 8		
TURN MODE 1		
SPEED COST 2		
BASE SPEED 16		
TURN MODE 2		
SPEED COST 4		
BASE SPEED 24		
TURN MODE 4		
SPEED COST 6		
ACCELERATION		
COST 1/4		
DECELERATION		
COST 1/4		
HIGH ENERGY		
TURN COST		
1+1/4		
EVASIVE		
MANEUVER		
COST 1+1/2		

WEAPONS USED	A	1	2	3	4
--------------	---	---	---	---	---

PLASMA ARMING: A, B, C, D, E, F, G

FEDERATION COMMANDER: CAPTAIN'S LOG #46
 FLEET SCALE SHIP CARD #L461
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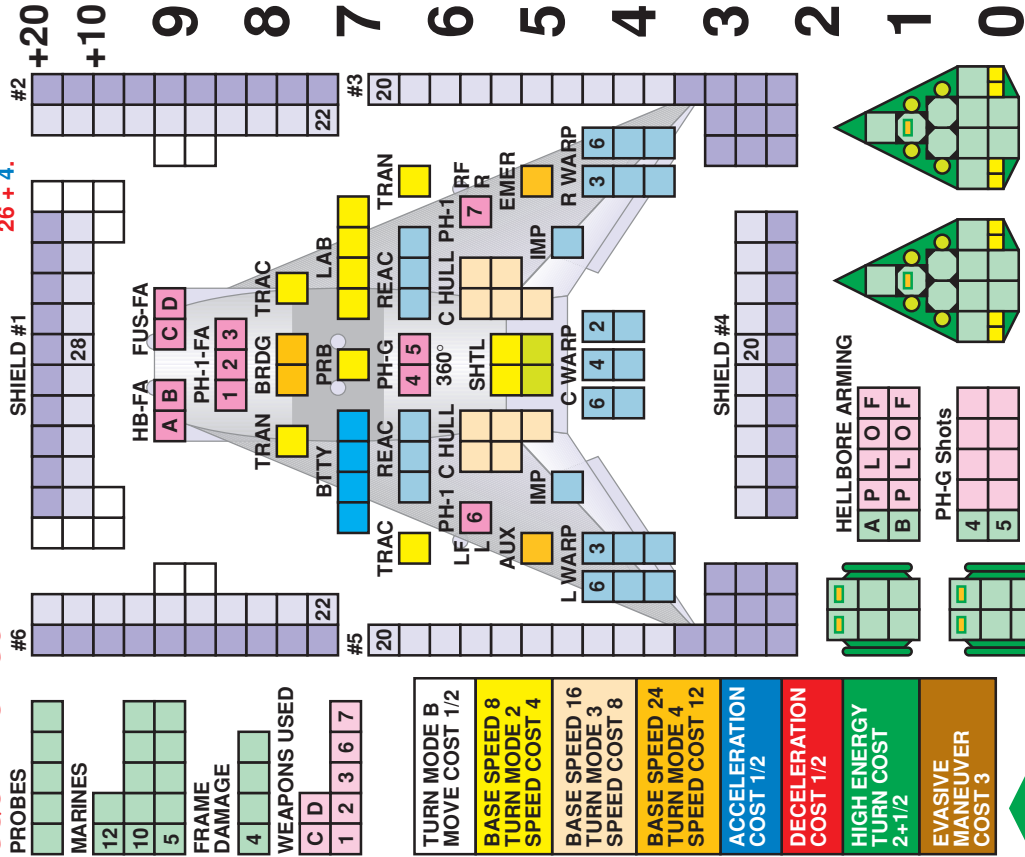
HYDRAN LION HUNTER WAR DESTROYER LEADER

SQUADRON SCALE

HMS Name _____

COUNTER DWL
POINT VALUE: 110+20
DAMAGE CONTROL: 2

Power when undamaged: 26 + 4.



FRACTIONAL POWER
0 1/4 1/2 3/4

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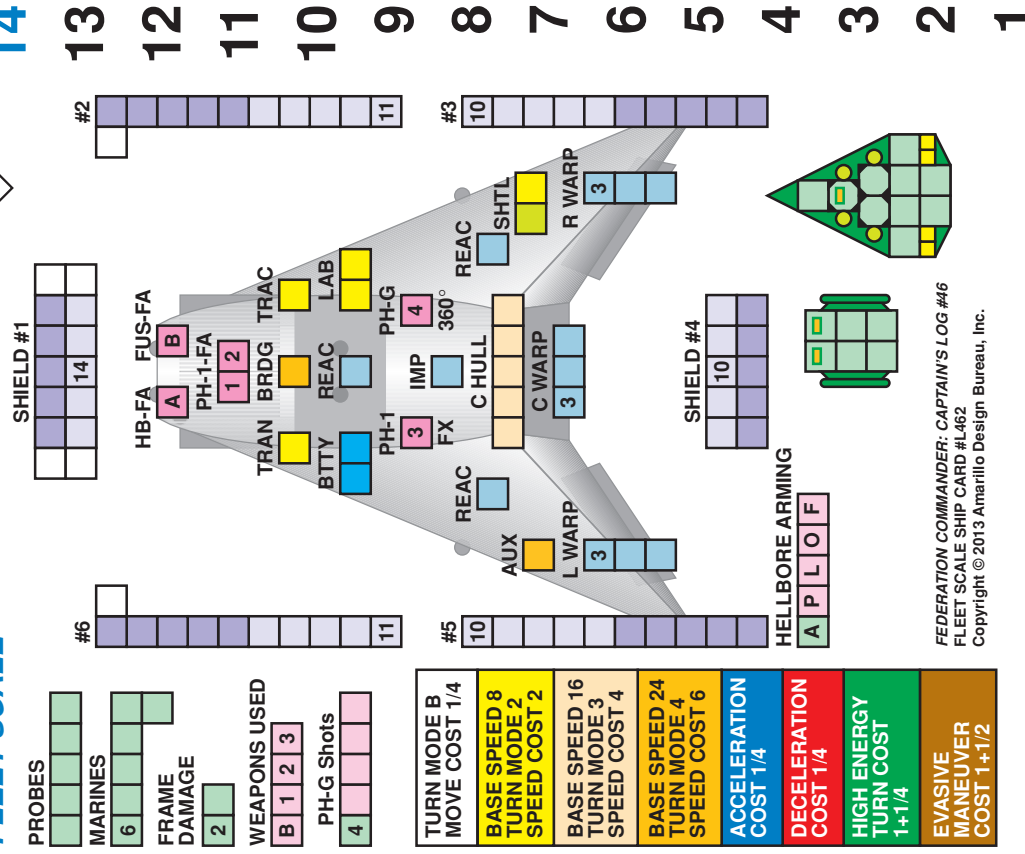
HYDRAN LION HUNTER WAR DESTROYER LEADER

FLEET SCALE

HMS Name _____

COUNTER DWL
POINT VALUE: 55+10
DAMAGE CONTROL: 1

Power Track icon showing a green and red triangle.



FRACTIONAL POWER
0 1/4 1/2 3/4

FEDERATION COMMANDER: CAPTAIN'S LOG #46
FLEET SCALE SHIP CARD #L462
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LYRAN ALLEYCAT WAR DESTROYER LEADER

SQUADRON SCALE

COUNTER DWL
POINT VALUE: 110
DAMAGE CONTROL: 2

POWER TRACK

Power when undamaged: 27 + 2.

MARINES
10 5

LMS Name _____

SHIELD #1
#6 20 28

SHIELD #2
#2 20

SHIELD #3
#3 20

SHIELD #4
#4 20

PH-2 360°
LS 5
PH-3
LS 7
TRAC
L WARP 6 3

PH-1-FA
FA DISR A
PH-1-FA L 3
TRAN
AUX
F HULL
PRB
ESG
REAC
SHTL

PH-1-FX
PH-1-FA 1 2
BRDG
LAB
EMER
R HULL
REAC
ESG
IMP
DISR-FX
C WARP 6 3

PH-3 360°
PH-3 4
TRAN
R HULL
BTTY
TRAC
R WARP 3 6

PROBES
FRAME DAMAGE 4

WEAPONS USED
A B C 1 2 3 4
5 6 7 8 Y Z
POWER IN ESG
Y 1 2 3 4 5
Z 1 2 3 4 5

TURN MODE A MOVE COST 1/2	ACCELERATION COST 1/2
BASE SPEED 8 TURN MODE 1 SPEED COST 4	DECELERATION COST 1/2
BASE SPEED 16 TURN MODE 2 SPEED COST 8	HIGH ENERGY TURN COST 2+1/2
BASE SPEED 24 TURN MODE 4 SPEED COST 12	EVASIVE MANEUVER COST 3

Ships of the LDR have four PH-Gs instead of two PH-3s and two PH-2s. BPV = 116.

L463

FEDERATION COMMANDER: CAPTAIN'S LOG #46
SQUADRON SCALE SHIP CARD #L463
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FRACTIONAL POWER
0 1/4 1/2 3/4

LYRAN ALLEYCAT WAR DESTROYER LEADER

FLEET SCALE

COUNTER DWL
POINT VALUE: 59
DAMAGE CONTROL: 1

POWER TRACK

MARINES
5

LMS Name _____

FRAME DAMAGE
2

PROBES

SHIELD #1
#6 10 14

SHIELD #2
#2 10

SHIELD #3
#3 10

SHIELD #4
#4 10

PH-2 360°
PH-2 3
F HULL
REAC
SHTL
L WARP 3

PH-1-FA
FA DISR A
PH-1-FA 1
AUX
F HULL
REAC
IMP
DISR-FX
B
C WARP 3

PH-1-FX
PH-1-FA 2
BRDG
LAB
TRAN
R HULL
REAC
BTTY
TRAC
R WARP 3

PH-3 360°
PH-3 4
TRAN
R HULL
BTTY
TRAC
R WARP 3

PROBES
FRAME DAMAGE 2

WEAPONS USED
A B 1 2 3 4 Z

POWER IN ESG
Z 1 2 3 4 5

TURN MODE A MOVE COST 1/4	ACCELERATION COST 1/4
BASE SPEED 8 TURN MODE 1 SPEED COST 2	DECELERATION COST 1/4
BASE SPEED 16 TURN MODE 2 SPEED COST 4	HIGH ENERGY TURN COST 1+1/4
BASE SPEED 24 TURN MODE 4 SPEED COST 6	EVASIVE MANEUVER COST 1+1/2

Ships of the LDR have two PH-Gs instead of one PH-3s and one PH-2. The arcs are LS/RS. BPV = 58.

L463

FEDERATION COMMANDER: CAPTAIN'S LOG #46
FLEET SCALE SHIP CARD #L463
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FRACTIONAL POWER
0 1/4 1/2 3/4

ISC DESTROYER LEADER

SQUADRON SCALE

POWER TRACK

26 25 24 23 22 21 20 19 18 17 16 15 14 13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0

COUNTER DDL

POINT VALUE: 110

DAMAGE CONTROL: 2

PLASMA A

20	
15	
10	
5	

PLASMA B

20	
15	
10	
5	

PLASMA C

20	
15	
10	
5	

PLASMA D

20	
15	
10	
5	

CSS Name

WEAPONS USED

A	B	C	D
1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8

This ship has no probe launcher.

MARINES

10			
5			
4			

FRAME DAMAGE

4			
---	--	--	--

TURN MODE B

1	2
---	---

MOVE COST 1/2

BASE SPEED 8

2	3
---	---

TURN MODE 2

4	5
---	---

SPEED COST 4

BASE SPEED 16

2	3
---	---

TURN MODE 3

4	5
---	---

SPEED COST 8

BASE SPEED 24

2	3
---	---

TURN MODE 4

4	5
---	---

SPEED COST 12

ACCELERATION COST 1/2

1	2
---	---

DECELERATION COST 1/2

1	2
---	---

HIGH ENERGY TURN COST 2+1/2

1	2
---	---

EVASIVE MANEUVER COST 3

1	2
---	---

FEDERATION COMMANDER: CAPTAIN'S LOG #46

SQUADRON SCALE SHIP CARD #L464

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L464

FRACTIONAL POWER

0 1/2 0 1/2

ISC DESTROYER LEADER

FLEET SCALE

POWER TRACK

13 12 11 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0

COUNTER DDL

POINT VALUE: 55

DAMAGE CONTROL: 1

PLASMA A

20	
15	
10	
5	

PLASMA B

20	
15	
10	
5	

CSS Name

WEAPONS USED

A	B	C	D
1	2	3	4

This ship has no probe launcher.

MARINES

5			
---	--	--	--

FRAME DAMAGE

2			
---	--	--	--

TURN MODE B

1	2
---	---

MOVE COST 1/4

BASE SPEED 8

2	3
---	---

TURN MODE 2

4	5
---	---

SPEED COST 2

BASE SPEED 16

2	3
---	---

TURN MODE 3

4	5
---	---

SPEED COST 4

BASE SPEED 24

2	3
---	---

TURN MODE 4

4	5
---	---

SPEED COST 6

ACCELERATION COST 1/4

1	2
---	---

DECELERATION COST 1/4

1	2
---	---

HIGH ENERGY TURN COST 1+1/4

1	2
---	---

EVASIVE MANEUVER COST 1+1/2

1	2
---	---

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FLEET SCALE SHIP CARD #L464

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L464

FRACTIONAL POWER

0 1/4 1/2 3/4

NAME:														
Federation ARES-class BB (700)						Science (150); Tractor Beams (8)								
SHIELDS <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>						Marines <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>								
HULL <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>						Probes <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>								
THRUST <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 1						WEAPONS <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 <input type="checkbox"/> 4								
WEAPONS			ARCS			RANGE			ATTACK DICE					
15× Phaser-1 (Dfs)			[TT5][FH6][PH5] [SH5][AH4]			5-10-15			25 18 13 9 6 4 3 2 2 1 1 1					
3× Phaser-3 (Dfs/Pnp)			[TT]			3-6-9			2 2 1 1 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0					
10× Photon Torpedo (Dx2)			[FF1][AA5]			5-10-15			11 7 5 4 3 2 1 1 1 0 0 0					
» Overload (Dx3/Slw)						3-6-9			20 14 10 7 5 4 3 2 1 1 1 0					
9× Drone Rack (Dx3/Exp/Gid/Skr)			[TT6][TT6][TT6] [TT6][TT6][TT6] [TT6][TT6][TT6]			8-16-24			40 28 20 14 10 7 5 4 3 2 1 1					

2036

FEDERATION BATTLESHIP

NAME:

HULL (1,3,5)						ENGINES (1,2)						SHIELDS (3,4)					
21	20	19	18	17	16	3	3	3	3	3	3	29	28	27	25	24	23
15	14	13	12	11	10	3	2	2	2	2	2	21	20	18	17	16	14
9	8	7	6	5	4	2	2	1	1	1	1	13	12	10	9	7	6
3	2	1				1	1	1				5	3	2			

WEAPONS (5,6)						SHIELD FACETS:					
1	2	3	4	5	6	F	FP	FS	AP	AS	A
XZ	XZ	XZ	X	X	Y	7	5	5	4	4	4
						6	4	4	3	3	3
						5	3	3	2	2	2
						4	2	2	1	1	1
						3	1	1			

SPECIAL

Drone Rack (9); Marine Squad (26); Probe (10); Science (150); Shuttle (6); Tractor Beam (5); Transporter (8)

BATTERY X					
Phaser-1	RNG	ROF	ACC	IMP	DMG
	15	1	4+	1	1
<i>Range-Based ROF</i>					
[ABCDE][ABCDE][ABCDE][ABCDE]	[ACE][ACE][ACE]	[BDF][BDF][BDF]	[GHI][GHI]	[JKL][JKL][JKL][JKL]	

BATTERY Y					
Phaser-3	RNG	ROF	ACC	IMP	DMG
	9	1	4+	1	1
<i>Anti-Fighter</i>					
[ABCDE][ABCDE][ABCDE]					

BATTERY Z					
Photon Torpedo	RNG	ROF	ACC	IMP	DMG
	15	1	4+	1	3
Photon Torpedo—Overload*					
Doubled Range Modifiers: *Carronade; *Slow-Firing					
[AB][AB][AB][AB][AB][AB]	[EF][EF]				

TURN	MOVEMENT ORDERS	SPEED	FIRED	NOTES
1			<input type="checkbox"/>	
2			<input type="checkbox"/>	
3			<input type="checkbox"/>	
4			<input type="checkbox"/>	
5			<input type="checkbox"/>	
6			<input type="checkbox"/>	
7			<input type="checkbox"/>	
8			<input type="checkbox"/>	
9			<input type="checkbox"/>	
10			<input type="checkbox"/>	



CAPTAIN'S LOG #46



FOR DUTY, ALL THINGS

The untold story of the *USS Mallory*, a frigate lost without a trace on the Day of the Eagle, the first day of the Romulan Invasion. Captured by the Romulans and sent on a mission to sabotage a Federation base, the ship's only hope is a badly injured Vulcan technician who awoke under a pile of wreckage.

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