

STAR LETTER #66

The Official *Star Fleet Battles* Newsletter

July 1990

TODAY IS DOOMSDAY!

The first installment of the long-awaited "Doomsday" edition of *Star Fleet Battles* (the Captain's Basic Set) went to the printers on 20 June. Other installments (Advanced Missions, Module C1, Module C2) will appear over the Summer and Fall.

BASIC SET (Stock #5501) is the cornerstone of the Captain's Edition. It is similar in content to the old Volume I. Basic Set (or its rulebook) will be needed to use any of the subsequent products. It will be a boxed product available in July.

ADVANCED MISSIONS (#5502) includes most of the rules from the old Volumes II and III. It will be a boxed product.

MODULE C1 includes the Lyrans, Hydrans, and WYNs.

MODULE C2 includes the Inter-Stellar Concordium, the, Andromedans, and the Neo-Tholians.

CAPTAIN'S RULEBOOK includes the rules from the four above products. It should appear by September.

Stay tuned to *Starletter* for updates on future releases.

NEW SHIP FOR STAR FLEET BATTLES

(R5.55) KZINTI SCOUT DRONE FRIGATE: The Kzintis found that they needed more long-range drone bombardment capability during the Fourth Klingo-Kzinti War, but that there were too few CD-class drone bombardment cruisers for the required missions and too few Strike Cruisers to spare any for conversion to CDs. Conversion of the smaller CL-class was considered, but was finally rejected in favor of using a smaller and cheaper platform.

The smaller DF-class drone frigate had been in service for some time as a cbse-range fire support platform, but lacked the sensors needed for long-range drone bombardment. The Kzintis created squadrons of DF drone frigates and SF scout frigates to fulfill the missions, but found that this diverted too many scouts from their normal duties. The solution was to install scout sensors on some of the DF-class drone frigates, creating the SDF or Scout Drone Frigate. The Kzintis considered the idea of converting all SF and DF ships to SDFs, but never had the time or funds to do so.

One spare shuttle. Entered service Y160. Docking points = 4. Explosion Strength 9. See the SSD in this issue.

F&E: SDF, (4) 3-4; command rating 3. Conversions: FF to SDF = 4; SF to SDF = 2; DF to SDF = 2. SDFs count against the limit on DF production.

SCANNERS REPORT

★ **CAPTAIN'S LOG #8** is tentatively scheduled for August 1990. This will be an expanded 80-page special issue.

★ **DOOMSDAY:** The long-awaited Captain's Edition of SFB will be released in the Summer and Fall of 1990. See the above announcement for details.

TASK FORCE COMES HOME TO TEXAS

After two years in California, Task Force Games will come home to Amarillo, Texas. Company President John Olsen said in an exclusive interview with *Starletter*: "It makes sense for us to move back to Amarillo. This will allow better coordination with Amarillo Design and with the major printing plants there. Being in the center of the country will also make shipping more efficient."

The move to Amarillo should be completed during July. A new Amarillo address is effective immediately. We'll let you know the new phone numbers in the next *Starletter*.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

On a space-available basis, *Starletter* will announce events of interest to SFB players, including conventions, PBM campaigns, local tournaments, club meetings, special store events, etc. ADB and TFG make no warranty as to the quality, dependability, reliability, or reputation of the items announced. Send your announcements to ADB, P.O. Box 8759, Amarillo, TX 79114. Please get them in as early as possible.

Readers should include a stamped self-addressed envelope when requesting information from one of the events listed here:

► **ORIGINS:** 28 June - 1 July 1990, Atlanta Georgia. SFB events will include Fleet Captains (National Championships), two Patrol tournaments, F&E, seminars, beginners tournament. Contact Origins 90, Box 47696, Atlanta, Georgia 30362.

► **ATLANTICON:** 13-15 July 1990, Baltimore MD. SFB events include 32-player single-elimination tournament sponsored by S&S Gaming and judged by Ed Slusarek. Prizes for 1st, 2nd, 3rd place. Contact AtlantiCon 90, PO Box 15405, Baltimore, MD 21220. This annual convention was the host of Origins 87 and will be the host of Origins 91, so drop by and check out the best players on the east coast.

► **GEN-CON:** 9-12 August 1990, Milwaukee. SFB events will include Fleet Captains, two Patrol tournaments, beginners, F&E, seminars. Contact GenCon Game Fair, P O Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147.

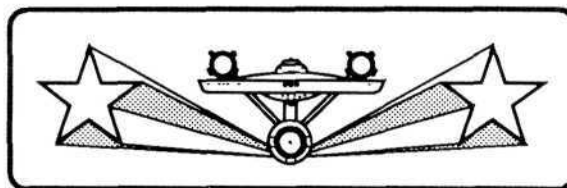
► **LEHICON III:** 21-23 September. SFB Patrol tournament: Play all day Saturday; players with best records play in finals on Sunday. Prizes are TFG gift certificates (1st \$50, 2nd \$25, 3rd \$10), handy with the new releases due this Fall. Beginners tournament on Sunday for 1-8 novice players; all rules will be explained. Chief Judge John Hammer; staff of S&S Gaming and Queens Wargaming Club. Contact Lehicon III, P O Box 1864, Bethlehem, PA 18016-1864.

► **COUNCIL OF FIVE NATIONS XVI:** 5-7 Oct, Albany NY. SFB Patrol tournament: Play all day Saturday; players with best records play in finals on Sunday. Prizes are TFG gift certificates (1st \$50, 2nd \$25, 3rd \$10), handy with the new releases due this Fall. Beginners tournament on Sunday for 1-8 novice players; all rules will be explained. Chief Judge John Hammer; staff of S&S Gaming and Queens Wargaming Club. Contact Schenectady Wargamers, PO Box 9429, Schenectady NY 12309.

► **PBM Campaign, Star Fleet HQ,** longest-running SFB campaign system. Send SASE for info to John Berg, 6122 North Artesian, Chicago, IL 60659. On GENie, contact J.BERG11.

CAPTAIN'S LOG #9 TO BE 'FIGHTER' ISSUE

Amarilb Design Bureau has announced plans to "focus" Captain's Log #9 on fighters (fiction, history, tactics, etc.). ADB has asked that SFB players submit new Term Papers, Tactics Articles, and Scenarios regarding this subject for use in CL#9. New ships, fighters, and rules are not being encouraged. We particularly need DF&E material related to fighters.



Starship Captain's Combat Badge

(SP70.0) ...AND SETTLE THEIR HASH

(Y161)

by Stephen V. Cole, Texas

During the fourth Klingo-Kzinti War, the Kzintis found that they needed more firepower to fight their enemies. One solution to this problem was the introduction of a special version of the Drone Frigate design intended to provide the long-range targeting needed to bombard enemy fleets with cruise drones. The new Scout Drone Frigate design enabled the diminutive but easier to produce Drone Frigate to supplement the limited numbers of Drone Cruisers in providing drone fire support and conducting independent drone bombardment missions, and in a pinch could perform as a Scout.

The Kzinti formed bombardment squadrons of two Drone Frigates with one of the new Scout Drone Frigates for this purpose. The new tactical grouping worked well enough until that fateful day in Y161 when one of these groupings, launching cruise drones at a Klingon fleet five million kilometers away, was surprised by a fast detachment sent out to "settle" the score.

(SP70.1) NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 2; the Kzinti player and the Klingon player.

(SP70.2) INITIAL SET-UP

KZINTI: 3rd Drone Bombardment Group (Captain Fourth Rank "Cat Who Dreams"): Drone Frigate *DF 65* in 3107, Scout Drone Frigate *SDF 91* in 2808, Drone Frigate *DF 77* in 2510. All at WS-II, heading B, speed 2.

KLINGON: (Commander Kolandian) *D7 Annihilation* in 0130, *F5 Vigilance* in 0129, *E4 Swatter* in 0128. All at WS-II, heading C, speed max.

(SP70.3) LENGTH OF SCENARIO: The scenario continues until all forces belonging to one side have been destroyed, captured, or have disengaged.

(SP70.4) SPECIAL RULES

(SP70.41) MAP: Use a floating map.

(SP70.42) SHUTTLES AND PFs: No shuttles or PFs have warp booster packs.

(SP70.421) MRS shuttles may be purchased [up to the limits in (J8.5)] under (SP70.431).

(SP70.422) There are no fighters in this scenario.

(SP70.423) There are no PFs in this scenario.

(SP70.43) COMMANDER'S OPTION ITEMS

(SP70.431) 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. Note that whatever is spent here counts in the Modified Victory Conditions (S2.2) as victory point for the enemy.

(SP70.432) All drones are "slow," speed-8. Type-II and type-V drones (speed 12) are available for purchase as special drones. Kzinti drones are specified in (SP70.45); note that type-III drones are speed 12.

Each ship can purchase special drones up to the historical percentages as part of the Commander's Option Items. Note that (S3.2) allows the Kzinti drone ships extra points for this purpose.

(SP70.44) Refits: There are no refits available in this scenario.

(SP70.45) Each Kzinti ship has two type-III-XX drones in each of its racks. Each has 24 type-III-XX reload drones available (12 in reload storage and 6 in each cargo box). The Kzinti ships have no other drones.

(SP70.5) VICTORY CONDITIONS: Use the Modified Victory Conditions (S2.2). The Kzinti receive a two-point bonus for each of their type-III-XX drones that escapes (i.e. moves more than 35 hexes from any Klingon ship) in direction C or D.

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(SP70.6) VARIATIONS: The scenario can be played again under different conditions by making one or more of the following changes:

(SP70.61) Replace the Klingon force with a Lyran Tiger CA, Leopard DD, and Cheetah FF.

(SP70.62) Allow one or both sides to substitute similar hull types and use the tactical intelligence rules to avoid being surprised or to surprise your opponent.

(SP70.63) Use only the Kzinti SDF and the Klingon F5.

(SP70.64) Replace the Klingon force with a Klingon D6V carrier group (Z-2 fighters), and use medium speed drones.

(SP70.65) Allow the Kzinti to roll two dice at the beginning of every turn before Energy Allocation and receive a CS (speed max, WS-III, heading at Kzinti player's option) as a reinforcement at the start of the first turn in which the total of the two dice is less than the turn number. The ship can only enter from directions F or E 35 hexes from the nearest Klingon ship.

(SP70.7) BALANCE: The scenario can be balanced between players of different skill levels by one or more of the following:

(SP70.71) Change the E4 to an F5.

(SP70.72) Replace the SDF with a CD.

(SP70.73) Delete or add a frigate to either side.

(SP70.74) Increase the starting speed of the Kzinti ships.

(SP70.75) Reduce the weapons status of one side to 0.

(SP70.8) TACTICS

KZINTI: You can improve your chances of success by splitting up your ships. This will mean the loss of mutual support, but the same goes for the Klingons. Two of the frigates should survive; the other (the one that draws the D7) will live on in the pantheon of Kzinti heroes. Note that all three frigates could fire drones at the aimed at the D7. You do not have the "direct-fire" weapons capability to defeat the Klingons, so you must use what advantages you have. Consider direct drone runs on the Klingon ships. Remember, it is not that easy to destroy 18 drone racks from three different ships, and from point-blank range with careful timing, you can deliver a lot of damage even if only two frigates are alive to do so. If you can kill or cripple the D7 in such an attempt, your two surviving frigates should have little trouble in defeating the two Klingon frigates. However, keep careful track of your drone racks. It is probably a good idea on average to only fire half the racks on any given ship so that the other half can be in the act of reloading. Since type-III-XX drones are double space, you will find yourself emptying the racks rather quickly!

KLINGON: The primary Klingon mission is to stop the bombardment. The best way to do this is, of course, to destroy the Kzinti frigates. However, you may want to form your ships in a crescent in direction C/D from the Kzintis. This will prevent any drones from "leaking" through while you close for the kill. Use your drones for counter drone work and your phasers for the close-in battle (that is what phaser-2s are for). Try to pick the Kzinti ships off one by one with long range (range 15) disrupters.

(SP70.9) DESIGNER'S NOTES: Veteran players will recognize this as the previously published scenario (SL24.0) from Captain's Log #1. The scenario is revised to show the new Kzinti SDF. You can also see the considerable difference between the new Doomsday format for scenarios and the old format; many undefined areas are now properly presented.

Most of the old Captain's Log scenarios will, over the next two years, be upgraded to Doomsday format (with the new ships added) and used in a new series of Scenario Modules.

Historical Outcome: The Klingons destroyed two of the Drone Frigates and forced the third to disengage. Kolandian's performance was not regarded as entirely satisfactory, and while he was retained in command, he was not promoted. His desire to prove himself would lead him to an engagement with the Kzinti Carrier *Cutlass* in Y166. The Kzinti commander, who survived the battle, was disgraced and reduced in rank. He died almost a decade later while in command of a freighter. * * *

PLAYTEST REPORT FORMAT

For your report to be useful, it must be typed (computer graphics are ok) and in the following format. Put each ship (or scenario or rule) on a separate 8.5x11" page. List your name, address, and phone number on every page. List all playtesters who played the scenario or ship at least once.

REPORTS ON SHIPS

1. List the Race, Class, and Project (900-series) number.
2. What mission is this ship intended for? Is it suitable for that mission? Why or why not?
3. How many times did you test the ship in one-on-one duels? What ships did you test it against? What were the results?
4. How many times did you test the ship in squadron or fleet battles? Describe the fleets or squadrons used. Did the ship perform its intended mission adequately?
5. Does the ship have any hidden flaws? Are power, speed, shields, and weapons appropriate? Is the Sensor/Scanner track typical for that race? Is the ship recommended for publication?

REPORTS ON SCENARIOS

1. List the title and SP control number (e.g. SP601).
2. How many times did you play the scenario? How many times did you play it to completion?
3. Is the scenario unbalanced? To what extent, and toward whom?
4. List any of these terms that apply to the scenario: fun, boring, predictable, stupid, silly, one of the best, just another scenario.
5. Is there a "trick key" that can unlock the scenario and cause it to fall apart? If so, describe it, how it happens, why that is bad, and what you suggest we do about it.
6. List any proposed changes you think should be made.
7. Should this scenario be published? Immediately? Whenever there is space? In conjunction with something else?

REPORTS ON RULES (Can be used for existing rules)

1. List the rule number and the issue of Starletter it was in.
2. Ask any questions about how it works or what it means.
3. List any conflicts with other rules.
4. List any game balance effects or changes in tactics that will be caused by this rule.
5. List any mistakes or typos you found in it.
6. Indicate anything that could be made more clear by an example or further explanation.

NEXT ISSUE OF STARLETTER

The next issue of Starletter will be mailed in Sept 1990, bringing you more exciting material for the Star Fleet Universe.

PUBLISHER'S INFORMATION

STARLETTER is written by Amarillo Design Bureau and published by Task Force Games, PO Box 50145, Amarillo TX 79159.

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SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

Subscriptions to Starletter cost \$5 for six issues (one year) in the US, Canada, APO, and FPO. Issues are mailed by First Class mail. Overseas subscriptions are \$10 for six issues and are sent by Air Mail. All payments must be in US funds. All checks must be drawn on a US bank and have magnetic code numbers on the bottom. International Postal Money Orders are acceptable.

BACK ISSUES

Back issues #57 to date (four-page format) are available from the TFG spare parts department for \$2 each (US funds). Earlier back issues are not available. These issues include:

- #57: Romulan RoyalHawk SSD, Playtest Scenario SP463 Tang-Chi (Kzinti fighters vs Klingons).
- #58: Revised SSDs for Gorn DD, Orion CR, Fed CVA; new SSDs for Klingon G1N, Lyran Bobcat-C.
- #59: Kzinti Combat Tug SSD, SP60 Battle of Adanerg.
- #60: SP636 Mirror Image Monster and SP598 Mating Frenzy (dragons!), SFB Historical Scenario cross-index grid.
- #61: Klingon F5W DW SSD; SP502 Mothball Mutiny.
- #62: Federation Battleship SSD; Playtest Scenario SP1061 Taste of Fire; F&E Micro-Scenario (1001.0) Last Link.
- #63: SP1211 Scout Report; Federation War Destroyer.
- #64: Federation FFB (Revised SSD), SP1301 Interceptor Training (Lyran Vs Hydrans).
- #65: Lyran Mountain Lion SSD, SP1311 Roar of the Golden Cub, Doomsday release announcement.

TASK FORCE GAMES SPARE PARTS

Spare parts are available for all Task Force products. Contact Task Force at the above address for a price list. All TFG products are available by mail directly from the company. Write and ask for a catalog of available products.

SFB ON GENIE

The very popular Star Fleet Battles bulletin board has been moved to the GENIE computer network. Star Fleet is Category 10 on Page 805 Menu item #1. Ask your local computer dealer for info on how to register on GENIE. The computer system provides overnight access to the staff and rapid answers to SFB rules questions. Available for downloading are new SSDs, rules, and scenarios. Ongoing discussions of new rules proposals give you a chance to express your feelings before the product is printed. You can contact "TFG" or "ADB\$" directly by Email on GENIE.

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