

MONGOOSE PUBLISHING PRESENTS

Signs & Portents

WARGAMER

43

Action At Ak'shi'tu

Dilgar meet pak'ma'ra in a brutal slugfest!

The Zapasnovan War part 2

Great series of linked Battlefield Evolution scenarios

A Call to Arms 2nd Edition Preview

The far future before your eyes!

Plus... GOMC-1 Event Cards, New B5 Ship Stats, Kellerman's Kodiaks, Victory at Sea Tirpitz Campaign, ACTA Hyperspace Rules and much, much more!

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We've been ever so busy here this month. Battlefield Evolution, Starship Troopers Evolution, Victory at Sea, A Call to Arms...that's some list of games to be involved with!

Also, that's without my involvement in designing the World War II Evolution game and flying my Messerschmitts around as we develop our 3-D aerial combat engine. Oh, and taking over 'command' of the Mongoose Infantry Demo Teams. And taking over running the UK Conventions booth.

Did I mention learning how to operate the digital printing machinery that we now have at the Studio? That's some serious technology, I can tell you.

Yes, we at Mongoose are busy, busy bees.

What's my point? Well, nothing much really, other than letting you guys know I don't sit here twiddling my thumbs. A lot of people think the gaming industry is nice work if you can get it, but as our new Studio Assistant, Ed Russell (welcome, Ed!) can already tell you, in between learning games there's a fair bit of work to be done.

You'll see a couple of particularly interesting one-page articles this month. One is a revelation about the fifth (yes, the fifth) Starship Troopers race, and the other is the first of my monthly Mongoose Infantry columns.

This is also a bumper issue - 88 pages, no less! Am I spoiling you? But of course! It's the Mongoose way, so pile into S&P, feet up with a mug of Horlicks, of course, and enjoy the fruits of our labours.

Ian

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<p>Death in the Cursed Earth</p>  <p>Another free expansion for your Gangs of Mega-City One Game</p>	<p>Kellerman's Kodiaks</p> <p>Background on this heavyweight unit.</p> 
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A handy reference for Armchair Admirals everywhere.



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Just to prove we haven't forgotten Gangs of Mega-City One, there's not one but two articles this month.



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EYE ON MONGOOSE

This Month's Releases and Tournament News



Raiders Delta-V2 Fighters

At nearly double the cost of its predecessor the V2 is a well-made and well-armed combat fighter. Larger than the Delta-V, the V2 is a much needed revamping of the old chassis. Keeping its signature 'chip fighter' look and the ability to use the same launching and docking methods as the older model, the V2 is superior in almost every regard. Stronger weaponry, faster thrusters, more condensed armour plating and superior manoeuvrability sets the V2 apart as a new era for raiders.

Techno Mage Pinnacle

The Order of the Techno Mages is a powerful, mysterious and almost mythical entity and their personal spacecraft even more so. Black, sleek and seamless they soar through the stars with neither heed nor care of the world around them. It is said that they can appear as they wish, creating images of comets and asteroids around themselves to cloak their presence.



Vorlon Transports

It is a testament to the technology of the Vorlons that their most common craft, a humble transport for agents and diplomats, is comparable to many front line warships of the younger races. Though it lacks the raw firepower and durability of the Destroyer, the Transport is an extremely capable vessel benefitting from most Vorlon technologies such as adaptive armour and a self-repairing hull.

Vree Z'Takk Command Saucer

Only the combined trading guilds of the Vree could have countenanced building this warship. Though it compromises on what was ultimately possible, unlike the combined efforts of the Abbai and Brakiri with the Brivoki, the Z'Takk command saucer is still a formidable vessel. It had long been believed that Vree technology was beginning to stagnate with few significant developments taking place in recent years but the trade treaties of the ISA have been embraced whole-heartedly by the trading guilds and it has been the Vree who have benefited from the resulting influx of money as a result. This alone made the Z'Takk possible, a huge saucer with integrated hangers and multiple banks of weapon bays, all combined into a design that retains the Vree's noted agility.



Mystery ACTA Sneak Peak



Many Centauri spies died to bring you these photos of work in progress as a mysterious new ship is sculpted. Well, not really, but it sounded cool at the time. Besides, we were fresh out of Bothans.

Lublin Starship Troopers Tournament

Your reporter on the scene from Poland: Paweł 'Bartniczek' Bartnik

Despite a very cold winter outside, the atmosphere in the "Krzy" store in Lublin, Poland on the 16th of February was heated. The reason for this in-store climate change was the 1st Lublin Starship Troopers Tournament.

Although seven participants signed up, only five of them were brave enough to stand against their destiny and the sub-zero temperatures!

The participants were: Jakub M. with his elite Pathfinders, Rafał W. with his unyielding Exosuits, Marcin G. with his bloodthirsty Skinny Lord, Radek B. with his powerful Marauders and Mateusz M. with his solid CAP Troopers.

The army limit was 1000 points to allow for many relatively fast battles, which also ensured nobody was excluded for lack of miniatures. Each commander had the chance to challenge another to a duel in addition to their scheduled opposition.

The tournament certainly seemed to go down well with all the people who had the opportunity to observe us, and I'm guessing that new players will be joining us very soon!



BATTLEFIELD EVOLUTION

ARMIES OF THE FUTURE

EFTF WARRIOR AND COMMAND SECTION



Trained at the Sandhurst College, British Army officers have few equals. This Command Section is able to watch the entire progress of the battle unfold on their digital links, then direct their forces effectively, planning hit and run attacks or directing firepower to where it is most critical.

The Warrior APC is able to ferry squads across the battlefield in safety, its heavy armour protecting them while the 40mm cannon makes short work of all but the most heavily armoured opposition. The Warrior may be deployed with the Command Section, or on its own as transport for another squad.

This box set contains the Command Section and a Warrior.

PLA WZ-551 INFANTRY FIGHTING VEHICLE



Able to act as both APC and IFV, the WZ-551 is a versatile vehicle, giving the PLA a great deal of flexibility. Armed with both a 25mm cannon and MG, this vehicle is capable of mowing down large numbers of infantry, even those rooted in cover, as well as light vehicles.

A full infantry squad can be carried inside, in relative safety, allowing speedy deployment across the battlefield to claim objectives or provide reinforcements. After disgorging its troops, the WZ-551 can then support them with heavy firepower as they advance, using its massive hull for cover.

USMC SHADOW RST-V SQUADRON



Replacing the Hum-Vee, the Shadow is a hybrid transport capable of mounting many weapon systems. This version features the roof-mounted CKEM anti-tank missile, giving USMC forces a powerful anti-armour capability.

Able to transport a full fire team and Sergeant onto the battlefield, the Shadow is a fast-moving vehicle whatever the terrain, able to cover a large amount of ground in the rush for objectives. The CKEM system grants it a punch far above its size, allowing it to deal with enemy tanks that might otherwise annihilate the fire team. The Shadow is also capable of absorbing a surprising degree of punishment with little loss of function.

This box set contains three Shadow RST-V vehicles.

MEA FEDAYEEN SQUAD



A cut above the average infantry of the MEA, the Fedayeen have been well-trained and equipped with the finest weaponry their supporters can acquire. The AT-14 is an advanced anti-tank weapon, capable of destroying even the heavily armoured American Abrams, while the SVU sniper rifle will ensure enemy infantry are forced to keep their heads down.

Each member of the Fedayeen also carries an IED, ready to detonate upon arrival at an important objective or enemy armoured vehicle. The presence of the Fedayeen in a force guarantees the enemy will take you seriously.

MEA TECHNICALS



Renowned for their ingenuity, the MEA have taken civilian pick-up trucks and turned them into weapons of war. With a mounted PKM machine gun and the ability to take a small squad into battle, the Technicals are fast and agile.

By deploying high value squads into Technicals, you can ensure your objectives are quickly met, forcing the enemy onto the back foot while retaining the initiative all through the battle.

This box set contains three Technicals.

STARSHIP TROOPERS SALE

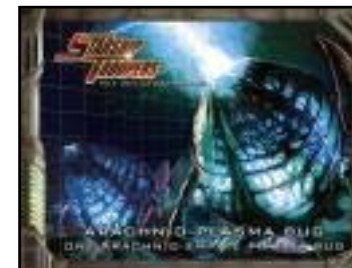
**Have you done your part?
If not, now is a better time than ever to join the fight.**

EFFECTIVE FROM FEBRUARY 12TH THE RETAIL PRICE OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS WILL BE REDUCED BY 25%

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**MGP 9100 STARSHIP TROOPERS MAIN GAME
MGP 910001 MOBILE INFANTRY CAP TROOPER SQUAD
MGP 910002 ARACHNID WARRIOR BUGS
MGP 910004 ARACHNID TANKER BUG
MGP 910007 MARAUDER APE SUIT
MGP 910008 MARAUDER CHICKENHAWK SUIT
MGP 910009 ARACHNID HOPPER BUGS
MGP 910014 SHINNIE RAIDERS BOXED SET
MGP 910019 ARACHNID BLISTER/BLASTER BUGS
MGP 910020 ARACHNID PLASMA BUGS
MGP 910026 ARACHNID RIPPLER BUG SWARM
MGP 910048 ARACHNID WARRIOR BUG MEGA SWARM**



Tactics For The Frontline

An Advanced Tactical Analysis/ Strategy Guide For A Call to Arms

Lance Park

A Call to Arms was the first tabletop wargame I ever played. My older brother had played assorted miniature-based games before, and had frequently involved me in tabletop roleplaying games, which I always found fun. The thing that bothered me about roleplaying games is that it sometimes took a long time to get to my favourite part: combat, but it'd really just be one-on-one, or a group of guys versus some big monster or monster party. Now, that's fun, but controlling a single character in a fight doesn't begin to compare to controlling a fleet of ships in combat. There's a rush to it, not just when you start rolling, but even beforehand. You have to pick and choose what ships to use, and have to consider their effectiveness against your opponent, and then you have to decide what kind of tactics do you want to use. Do I want to hit and run? Do I want to go in with the biggest ships and just start blasting? There is an apprehension when you put your plan into action, but there's an indescribable joy when that plan works.

With A Call to Arms, it gave me that, but it took time to fully enjoy.

As with any game, you have to learn the ins and outs of it before you can fully flesh out what tactics work against what people, and what tactics will just make your opponent call you a sissy as

he crashes right through. My first year of playing the game was met with some success, but mostly failure as I learned the rules and the ships, and then started learning tactics, by fighting and by asking people on the forums for help, consulted other players as to their personal thoughts and experiences with ships, and basically learning as much as possible about every fleet, every ship, in the game.

As my second year comes to a close, I have met with more success than failure in campaigns not through superior dice rolling skills (I have none, trust me), but through knowing my fleet and my enemy's fleet equally.

Does this make me an expert? No. Does this mean this tactical guide is better than the ones put out by Mongoose? Absolutely not. The tactical manuals put out in Signs and Portents provide valuable information on individual ships and general tactics against the main races, and I would highly advise reading them before reading this one, because this is an advanced tactical guide. I'm writing this assuming that you've played at least a handful of games, and that

you already know the general information of the fleets. I'm not going to go into intricate details about individual ships in every fleet; I will simply be writing about more advanced and detailed tactics to be used within a fleet, such as squadron groupings and weaknesses/strengths to exploit, but I will certainly address specific ships that I have found to be extremely useful, or dangerous, when using the different fleets, including ships from the Drakh and Dilgar, and ships from the Armageddon expansion.

With that, I hope you find this guide useful and as enjoyable as it was to write.



General Tactics

Before I get into specific fleet tactics for the races, there are a few general tactics that should help anyone who finds themselves losing constantly, but can't quite figure out why, and for that winning player, how to keep a firm death grip on your competition.

Taking One Big Ship or More Smaller Ones? The Pros and Cons.

Often the subject of much debate on the forums, the argument for using a single large ship supported by a few small ships or a large number of small ships is one that really depends on the race you're using. The Earth Alliance tends to have very good ships at higher priorities, such as the Omega or Warlock (be it War or Armageddon level), while the Minbari's ships are almost exclusively higher priorities, such as the many Sharlin variants. On the flip side, the Narn have excellent Skirmish priority ships, the Drakh's Skirmish ships usually comprise a good majority of their fleet, while two or three squadrons of Dilgar ships can shred other races warships like paper!

A large ship has certain advantages over a swarm of smaller ships; generally there is a bigger gun mounted, more all-around firepower, more survivability and damage, and can sometimes add an initiative bonus or fighter complement to a battle. In addition, with higher hull and damage, it can draw fire away from your smaller ships, and mangle your opponent's smaller ships with its secondary weapons while injuring warships with its main gun. For example, the Adira Royal Battleship or Ka'Bin'Tak Super Dreadnought are imposing and intimidating not just for the sheer weight of dice they can kick out in all arcs, but

the vast amounts of damage they can take before becoming crippled. This will make them priority targets which will draw fire from the smaller, more fragile ships so they can do quick attack runs repeatedly, as these huge ships take many turns of concentrated firepower to destroy. This, however, is a double-edged sword.

In campaigns, huge ships are expensive to replace if destroyed, and cost serious resources to replenish their lost damage and crew, so the role as damage magnet can be expensive. On top of that, you're sinking multiple points into a single ship, so if your opponent gets that one lucky critical, you lose a massive firepower edge. Another down side of using a big ship is that while it may give you a larger main gun and multiple weapon arcs, ultimately it does detract from the number of guns you're bringing. Superior numbers can mean a greater weight of firepower to bear; two to three Skirmish or Raid ships can usually match or even surpass the attack dice of a Battle or War priority ship, while twelve Skirmish ships can certainly match an Armageddon ship, but you generally lose the all around attack power in exchange for superior forward weapons and greater speed and agility.

Ultimately, the choice of taking a large ship over a swarm of smaller ones, or vice versa, is dependant on preference. Myself, I usually take one large ship and support it with lots of smaller ships, but there have been occasions where I've taken that one Armageddon ship that just eats up all your points but is just an intimidating presence on the field, and met with mixed success.



Pro: Big Ship Vs Small Ships

- Generally has a higher hull/damage score.
- Bigger/More guns in different arcs with longer range.
- Can act as a fire magnet or damage sponge.
- Potential Fighter advantage.
- Harder to kill.

Con: Big Ship Vs. Small Ships

- Less guns to actually shoot.
- Less ships to act as initiative sinks.
- Big ships tend to be slower and less agile, making getting out of tight spots harder.
- "All your eggs in one basket" syndrome.
- Big ship means big target.

Pro: Small Ships Vs. Big Ship

- More guns to fire.
- More ships to act as initiative sinks.
- Faster and more agile, allowing for hit and run tactics.
- Concentrated firepower.

Con: Small Ships Vs. Big Ship

- Less damage.
- Less guns in different arcs.
- More ships means more Victory Points.
- More ships means more of a drain on your fleet.

Initiative Sinks: What to Use

What Works Best:

Bombarders
Patrol Ships
Scouts
Carriers

Initiative sinks are specialised or less important ships that are generally moved before heavier ships to force the opponent's similar warships to move first. By having an opponent's ship move first, this lets you react and sometimes circumvent his strategy, and this tactic is especially important for races that rely on boresight weaponry, such as the Narn, Earth Alliance, or Drazi, seeing as boresighting a ship that hasn't moved is just folly.

Bombarders: Technically missile boats, or mine layers in the case of the Narn, bombarders can give a fleet some long range strike ability, though this will usually be limited to once every other turn. Their striking power and slow-loading fault make them excellent initiative sinks, as the forward arc missiles can fire when in range, and then the next turn the ship either uses a special action to stop its movement, or just inches forward at half speed. Also, by moving the bombarders first, they can focus on one target and potentially cripple it, allowing a warship to either clean up what's left or target something else while they are reloading.

Patrol Ships: The cheapest level of ships you can field at higher priorities in great numbers, patrol ships can perform a variety of roles; the Earth Alliance Hermes can be cheap missile boats, Centauri Corvans are cheap scouts, and Abbai Tiracas can be cheap strike ships, and so on. Despite their variety and flexibility in roles, all patrol ships excel at being initiative sinks for two reasons: they can die very easily and are cheap to replace at a measly 5 resource points.



In higher priority battles, patrol ships can be fielded in relatively large numbers, but suffer from being especially susceptible not just to any weaponry, but from exploding ships due to their low hull and damage. So, when they're targeted by enemy ships, chances are they will be destroyed. Yet, this is exactly what you want; your opponent wasting a turn destroying or mangling your patrol ships with its weapons while your bigger ships are free to take shots. What works best is getting a squadron or two of patrol ships and shoving them down your opponent's throat, preferably all in one arc so as to minimise fire taken, with their superior speed and agility, giving your opponent the choice of ignoring them and concentrating on your big ships, or getting sideswiped by a large number of smaller ships. As the saying goes, "One bee can sting you, a hundred can kill you."

The flaw of this tactic however, is obvious; your patrol ships will get destroyed, and once they are then you lose your initiative sinks, but in exchange for a couple rounds of superior positioning or swarming, this is a small price to pay!

Scouts: Most scout ships are small, cheap and stealthy, making them harder to hit and an excellent initiative sink at longer ranges, where their stealth makes them almost invisible. With

their relative cheapness, they can also be fielded in large quantities in higher priority battles. In addition, the scouts' natural ability to paint targets and lower stealth makes them an especially valuable field unit for boresight races like the Narn or Drazi. (Yes, the Drazi have a cheap scout now thanks to Signs and Portents Issue #38! Check it out!)

However, without the stealth feature most scouts are easy prey, especially at closer range where their lack of attack dice is most apparent. Ideally, you want to have your scouts acting as initiative sinks, skirting the outmost edges of the field, painting targets and lowering stealth. Also, when fielded in large numbers, I suggest not putting them into a squadron and instead letting them act as independent units, thus allowing a great number of ships to move before any of your warships.

Carriers: With wave after wave of fighters in their bays, carriers are a valuable commodity in a fight, especially with the change to fighters as of the Armageddon expansion. Now, why use these as initiative sinks? Because that's about all carriers are good for outside of their fighter support and usual initiative bonus.

Most carriers have lots of damage, but low hull and low attack dice. You could use a carrier in a damage sponge role, and with fighter-heavy races like the Earth Alliance any carrier will definitely become a priority target if it comes too close to the action, drawing fire away from your other ships, but with low hull scores carriers become easy prey for AP and Super AP weaponry, and its destruction or crippling would rob you of initiative and fighter benefits. Carriers are best at hanging back, supporting your fighters and fleet while going in a circle, allowing your strike ships to move later.

Scenarios: How to Use Them and How to Survive Them

Scenarios: the settings for all A Call To Arms combat. Without them, the game would become stagnant and repetitive with the same old combat every time. That being said, some scenarios are designed to favour one party or another, so the challenges can be difficult, yet rewarding when you pull it off.

Here are a few specific scenarios that you may encounter within a campaign, specifically Ambush, Convoy Duty, Blockade, and Carrier Clash.

Ambush

Definitely a scenario that favours the attacker, there are still ways for the defender to survive the attack, and even turn it to his advantage.

Defender Tactics

Everyone loves a good Ambush, except for the defender. Having to suffer through a whole turn of doing nothing but getting shot at really sucks. That being said, there are a few things you can do to try and minimise damage.

Defensive Ships: Try to take ships that have high hull values or other defensive measures, like Interceptors. While interceptors won't protect against beam weaponry, they will cut down on secondary armament, while a high hull value will cut down on the effectiveness of beams.

Maneuverable Ships: In some cases, you'll want ships that are agile and fast, allowing you to either get off the field quickly or come about to engage the enemy. The tradeoff for speed, however, will probably be a reduction in armour and a lower damage score, so it's really a tough choice and depends on your particular fleet.

All-Around Fire: Ships with all-around firepower, or at least decent side arcs, will at least let you be able to strike back by the second turn if you can't bring your forward firepower to bear.

Attacker Tactics

Being able to shoot fish in a barrel for one whole turn? Who wouldn't love that? However, there is a chance the defender could turn it around, especially at higher priorities where he can field large, durable ships that won't crumple easily and will have more weapons in different arcs. Also, remember that while you do get a free turn, the defender will have more ships next turn, so if he can bear down on you before you escape or cripple his ships, he'll have the numbers advantage. Here's a few tactics to increase your already formidable advantage.

Concentrated Firepower: If you're bringing a fair number of small ships to the fight, try to have them in groups, and have each group try to focus their firepower on a single target. If you can't kill a ship outright with their firepower, at least you'll severely damage it to finish it off next turn. Also remember to use the Concentrate Firepower! special action to maximise your damage potential.

Ships in Hyperspace: This tactic is really only effective in high priority Ambushes where you'll have the priority to hold a number of ships, or

one large ship, in Hyperspace. If you truly want to crush his forces, have some ships in Hyperspace open jump points in the rear or in the front of his deployed forces, so if he tries to run on the second turn you'll have a ship able to either shoot him on turn three (Or turn two if you have the Advanced Jump Point trait) or block his way while your already deployed forces continue the slaughter. This also means if he tries to come about to engage your forces, the ships jumping in will be able to hit him in the sides, essentially sandwiching his forces. If you're jumping in from the front, I highly advise using large, durable ships as he will shoot at the only obstacle between him and his freedom.

Swarm Tactics: While large ships could wedge themselves into the enemy fleet and unload in all arcs, I find small, fast attack ships with a speed of 10" to 12" with decent forward firepower (beams preferably) work well at Raid or lower priorities when deployed at the rearmost edge of your particular deployment zone. Rather than using a hammer (big ship with all around fire) to bash in his forces, I prefer to use scalpels to cut down specific ships, then move to the next target.



Blockade

This scenario relies on speed and firepower to complete the two opposite objectives: running like hell and preventing escape.

Blockader Tactics

Your job is to prevent the escape of the runner with extreme prejudice, but how do you do it when the runner is fast and has a free turn to run and shoot? Here's a few ideas how:

Fighters: With fighters moving last and firing first, this gives you an excellent advantage in this situation. Keeping a swarm of fighters waiting for the ships that must fly past is a viable tactic, especially considering how many flights you can field even at Skirmish priority. While they may be unable to destroy the incoming ships, they'll at least soften them up for your capital ships to deal with, and may even deal that lucky critical that stops them in their tracks. Plus, chances are the runner will field small, fast ships, but the usual trade off for that speed is lower hull and damage, allowing for greater effectiveness from your fighter flights.



Breaching Pods: Using these instead of fighters can be beneficial, because capturing ship can give you double victory points, and because small, fast ships tend to not have a very high troop score, so a veritable cloud of pods waiting near the edge can mean serious trouble if the runner can't fly immediately past them. However, the chances of a ship flying off the board before the troops can do enough damage is a distinct possibility and, coupled with the fact breaching pods are slow and have to be put towards the table edge be run into, using breaching pods in a Blockade scenario is a tricky tactic. However, if it works you'll definitely have bragging rights.

Deploy in the Corners or Sides: By putting your ships in the corner, you're basically leaving a path straight up the middle for the runner to go through, so there is some risk to this tactic. However, it also means the runner's ships would have to turn to fire at you for more than one turn, meanwhile you can simply move forward without turning for at least one turn, letting you concentrate firepower. In the event he does try to run down the middle, both corner forces can turn inward to bring multiple weapons to bear on both sides, or sandwiching the runner between two side arcs. This strategy can be combined with fighters, allowing for flexibility and serious damage potential if your capital ships are in the corners, with a bevy of fighters waiting right in the middle.

All-Around Firepower: I can't stress enough how important it is to have some degree of rear or side weaponry so that if the runners do get past, you can still have something able to fire at them. While strong weapons forward is important, it is always a good idea to hedge your bets and have something in the rear that can at least attempt to stop them.



Runner Tactics

Fewer points traded in for a free turn of fire; seems reasonable, right? Well, your goal here is not to smash like a rhino, but to run like a cheetah, so firepower shouldn't be on your mind.

Speed: It can't be overstated that your goal isn't to destroy the blockader, simply to get past him. To that end, I suggest ships with at least a speed of 10", though 12" is preferable. With a speed of 12", it increases to 18" with the special action All Power to Engines, thus it'll take approximately two-and-a-half turns to get off a 48 inch board, while a ship with a speed of 10" will only get a total of 15" from the special action, and thus take roughly three-and-a-half turns before getting off the board. That's two turns of fire to survive rather than one!

Deploy in the Corners: Since the blockader must deploy first, this gives you, the runner, a deployment advantage. If the blockader deploys in a line or clump in the middle, consider deploying in the corners, both if possible. This means the blockader will have to not only split his forces to tackle both groups, but will be unlikely to concentrate firepower with most of his ships since they'll have to turn to engage yours. If you have fast enough ships, the blockader might even have to come about to get you in his forward arc.

Convoy Duty

Civilian ships crumple under fire faster than a bridge rigged with dynamite, making an escort's job difficult, and an attacker's that much easier.

Civilians over Corporations: Rather than taking slow corporate freighters or a space liner, try taking civilian traders. Yes, you sacrifice damage, but you gain extra speed and can field more of them compared to the freighters. At higher priorities you can get a veritable army of traders, giving you more ships to get off the board and thus more victory points. This might seem like a problem, taking civilian ships that pop worst of all, but hey, you can get more bang for your buck.

Spread Them Out: Because of the low hull and damage on any civilian ship, one exploding ship can do serious damage to civilians in range. To combat this, try spreading them out as much as possible so they won't be caught in the explosions, and so the attacker will have to move in closer to get them, giving your escorts a chance to take them down.

Intermingling: Try to manoeuvre your civilian ships within four inches of an escorting ship. That way, if an attacker closes distance to attack the civilian ship, the escort will probably have enough range to use its guns. With multiple traders, try to have the escort group's arcs overlap so you have multiple weapons targeting an oncoming attacker.

All-Around Fire: You never know where the attacker will come from along the sides, so it's important to cover yourself as much as possible.

Fighters: With their quick speed, fighters should be able to intercept sideswiping attackers in at least two turns, and at lower priorities they can inflict serious damage to smaller ships and intercept enemy fighters before they can tear apart the civilian ships.

Attacker Tactics

Here are some ideas on how to accomplish your directive as quickly as possible to minimise damage taken.

Deployment: You can deploy at any point along the edges and on any turn, so use that to your advantage. Wait to deploy your forces until you can get as far behind him as possible, and force him to have to turn completely around to target you with his stronger arcs. To help support this tactic, try to have a few of your tougher ships cut off the civilians towards the exit point, but only when or if the escorts start to turn to take on your rear attackers, otherwise you're just putting targets out their for him to shoot.

Sniper Ships: As weak as the civilians are, the escorts will be anything but. Remember, however, that your targets are the civilians, as cruel as that sounds so try not to bother taking out his ships if possible. To try and minimise the time spent in the escort's arc, try to take ships with long range

weapons, 19 to 20 inches if possible, with decent stopping power. It does not take a lot of dice to kill the civilians, so if you can take out one or two ships before you're even in range of the escorts, you can move on to the next ship and clean up the board in one or two more turns.

Forward Arc Fire: You could just wedge a ship in the civilian and escort fleets and unload in all directions, but that would mean you would most definitely be within range of multiple weapon arcs from the escorts. In this case, you want an emphasis on forward weapons so when you swoop in, you can outright destroy the civilians with no doubt.

Weight of Numbers: This is a situation where a bunch of small ships are preferable over a large ship, especially at lower priorities; more ships means more guns, which means you can target more ships. You want to destroy the civilians as quickly as possible, preferably in one fell swoop so you won't have to make a second attack run that'll see the escorts unloading on you.



Carrier Clash

There's something about a swarm of fighters on the field that makes you smile, unless it isn't your swarm.

Your Carrier: Fighters, fighters, and more fighters! That's what you need, what's going to be carrying them? You could just bring a regular carrier, but since the only ship that can be a higher priority than the scenario is the carrier, why not splurge your points and bring a fleet carrier if possible? That way you'll have the ability to retrieve destroyed fighters and send them right back out!

Your support ships: The first thought is to take ships specialised in anti-fighter weaponry, and this is a valid idea. However, remember that your opposition won't just be taking fighters; there will be capital ships too! The fighters will primarily be intercepting each other for a while, so you should field a few ships that can take on other capital ships.

How to Win: First off, have your fighters intercept enemy fighters to keep them off your back. With your long range weaponry, try to take out the enemy ships that have anti-fighter weaponry, if you can. This will allow your fighters to roam and target capital ships - after dealing with enemy fighters - with their blessed dodge keeping them safe. Also, try to have your own anti-fighter ships behind your fighters that are engaged in dogfights. That way if your fighters lose, you can wipe that smirk off his face by shooting the fighter flight. After taking out the anti-fighter ships, focus on capital ships so they won't go after your own carrier. Your last target should be the enemy carrier since they're relatively weak in hull. If the fighter opposition is destroyed, definitely have your fighters swarm weaker enemy ships to free up targets for your strike ships.

Prioritising Targets: What to Shoot First!

In the beginning turns of a battle, the general rule of thumb is to shoot anything in range, and this is a valid tactic. However, when ranges start to close, that skirmisher you shot at the previous turn might not be the best target compared to that carrier behind it, so that leaves you with a choice; finish off a wounded target or try to take out a bigger, dangerous, undamaged ship?

Here are some targets that should definitely be considered before attacking that limping ship.

Heavy Hitters: If you can bring a multitude of weapons to bear on a larger warship with a reasonable chance of wounding it, take that shot.

A large ship means a large gun, so if you can take out that gun before it fires, that is one less thing to worry about.

Bombarders: Every other turn you have to suffer through a hail of artillery, and that gets annoying quick. A lot of bombarders have weak hull and relatively low damage, so sustained firepower would probably destroy them. If you can get rid of some, if not all, of the bombarders before they have enough time to inflict too much damage, then there's less long range fire to soak up.

Fleet Carriers: Fighters are a nuisance to deal with, especially when they keep coming back! You take out the carrier, which is weak in armor, you take out the fighter and any initiative bonus it gives. The problem with this is the same as trying to take out the bombarders; both tend to hang towards the back of the battlefield with their own ships blocking your way. Still, if at all possible, a fleet carrier is a priority target.

Scouts: If you can get at a scout, you can take away the ability to paint targets from your opponent, or the ability to lower stealth, and an initiative sink. This is especially true if you're facing a boresight fleet that relies on a scout, or scouts, for getting those vital re-rolls. The trick with targeting a scout is getting past the stealth score, which is where a swarm of fighters might work to take it out, or at least cripple it.

I hope you enjoyed this tactical guide. If you feel anything in this guide is wrong, or if you'd like to share some of your own strategies, or if you have any questions I can answer, please feel free to e-mail me at MattBlackEmerid@aol.com under the title of "A Call To Arms".

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Gangs of Mega-City One

RANDOM EVENT CARDS

A NEW OPTION FOR GANGS OF MEGA-CITY ONE

Gary Berner

Some people are just not satisfied with a game until they can add more and more layers of complexity, while others prefer a simpler, minimal approach. These Random Event Cards for your *Gangs of Mega-City One* game will hopefully suit both styles of play - there is no need to memorise a new rulebook, while they add virtually limitless room for expansion. Once you have played with the printed cards for a while, you may even wish to try adding some of your own design. No event card can really “unbalance” the game, as there is an equal chance of either player drawing it.

Preparation

Print out both the card backs and card faces. It is recommended you print out two sets of cards, but if you find yourself running out of cards mid-game you can always print a larger deck. It does not matter how many duplicates you have.

Each player draws one card at the beginning of each turn, and can play it whenever they wish (as per any restrictions on the card itself), even during their opponent’s turn if the card allows it. Cards are discarded once used, and unplayed cards may be kept for future use – there is no limit on the number of cards you can play in one turn, so you can build a hand throughout the game and play them all in a single turn if you wish.

Using the Cards

Each card is divided into two sections: Played, and Effect.

Played

This tells you when the card may be played. For example, some cards may be played at any time, and others only when certain other game events have occurred (such as a model taking damage or shooting at another model).

Effect

This tells you the effect the card has on the game.



<p>Luck of the Gruds</p> <p>Played: At any time.</p> <p>Effect: Select one model. That model is completely immune to all damage for the rest of the turn, dodging bullets and parrying blows with insane skill.</p>	<p>Out of Ammo</p> <p>Played: At any time.</p> <p>Effect: Select one model. That model loses the use of one ranged weapon of your choice for the duration of the game.</p>	<p>It's Mine, Now</p> <p>Played: During close combat.</p> <p>Effect: Select one model in close combat. Knocking their opponent's weapon out of their hands, they deftly catch it in their own. The opponent permanently loses a close combat weapon of your choice, while the chosen model permanently gains it.</p>	<p>I'm Outta Here</p> <p>Played: At any time.</p> <p>Effect: Any model of your choice (other than a Top Dog) may be withdrawn from the game. You may choose a model from either your side or your opponent's. The model remains on the gang roster and may be used in the future.</p>	<p>Sprint</p> <p>Played: During any Move action.</p> <p>Effect: Any model of your choice gains 2" to their speed for this move action.</p>
<p>Maybe This Was Not Such a Good idea</p> <p>Played: During a WtF check.</p> <p>Effect: With the gang having doubts about this rumble, the WtF roll suffers a -1 penalty.</p>	<p>Not This Time</p> <p>Played: When your opponent plays a random event card.</p> <p>Effect: This card cancels your opponent's random event card.</p>	<p>I Can Hit It</p> <p>Played: During a shoot action.</p> <p>Effect: The shooting model gains +2 to its agility check for the purposes of this one shoot action.</p>	<p>Knockback</p> <p>Played: During close combat.</p> <p>Effect: Select one model in close combat. Before resolving the combat, they may push any one opponent back by 1", preventing close combat with that opponent.</p>	<p>Thanks for the Donation</p> <p>Played: During close combat.</p> <p>Effect: Select one model in close combat. Displaying stunning dunking ability, the model lifts 1000cr out of their opponent's pocket. Your opponent loses 1000cr while you gain the same amount.</p>
<p>I Never Fumble</p> <p>Played: During a fumble.</p> <p>Effect: You may ignore the effects of this fumble.</p>	<p>Razor Sharp</p> <p>Played: During close combat.</p> <p>Effect: Select one model. Due to spending some time earlier sharpening their weapons and adding extra spiky bits, that model gains +2 to their damage during this round of close combat.</p>	<p>Aaaahhhhhh....</p> <p>Played: When falling.</p> <p>Effect: The falling model somehow manages to survive the fall completely unscathed. Ignore any damage that may occur due to the fall.</p>	<p>It's a Long Shot...</p> <p>Played: During a shoot action.</p> <p>Effect: The shooting model can extend the range of any ranged weapon by an extra 6" for this action only.</p>	<p>Ow, I Twisted My Ankle</p> <p>Played: During any Move action.</p> <p>Effect: After catching their foot in a nasty crack in the pedway, the model has their speed reduced to 1" for this action only.</p>

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Hyperspace



Experimental Rules for Jump Points in A Call to Arms

Matthew Sprange

Here in Mongoose Towers, we have been messing around with hyperspace, jumping ships into realspace, jumping back out again, giving the engines some real strain as we tinker with the rules. The following should clarify any confusion you have with hyperspace right now, as well as add some tweaks which should make the game a little more tense.

These rules are not 'official' in any way, but try them out and let us know what you think of them on our forums. If they prove popular, we will include them in our next A Call to Arms release!

Hyperspace Travel

Where stated in scenarios, one or both fleets may start the game with some or all of their fleets in hyperspace. This effectively forms a reserve, allowing you to bring ships on during the game, often in advantageous positions to keep the enemy on the back foot. These ships are not deployed on the battlefield at the start of the game but are instead kept to one side.

Ships in hyperspace may not attack one another in any way.

Entering Realspace

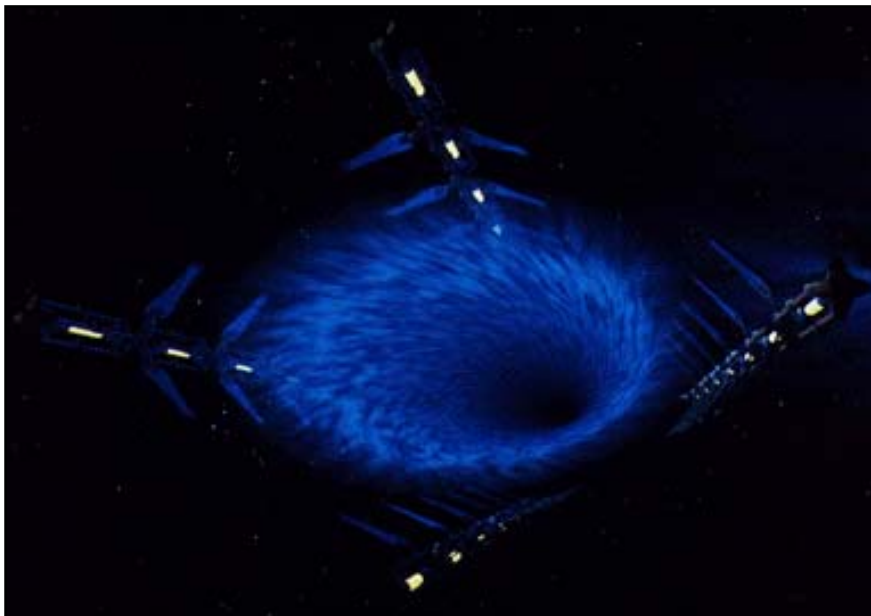
So long as at least one friendly ship remains on the battlefield, any ships waiting in hyperspace may be brought into play – if no friendly ships are on the battlefield, then ships waiting in hyperspace cannot be brought into the game.

To bring ships into realspace (that is, bring them from hyperspace and onto the table), at least one must have the Jump Point or Advanced Jump Point trait, and perform the Initiate Jump Point! Special Action. This is done during the Movement Phase by nominating the ship to move in initiative order as normal.

Place a jump point counter anywhere on the table. Roll 3D6 and deduct the ship's Crew Quality – the counter is then moved this far in a random direction, as it is almost impossible to accurately predict the correlation between hyperspace and realspace. Ships with the Advanced Jump Point trait will not deviate at all, allowing you to simply place their counters.

This jump point may be held open for up to three turns, so long as the ship continues to use the Initiate Jump Point! Special Action and may be used by any friendly ships that do not have the Jump Engine trait who are also waiting in hyperspace. As soon as the ship creating the jump point moves onto the battlefield, the counter is removed.

All ships must leave the jump point from its forward arc. Moving from hyperspace to realspace in this way demands a great deal of energy and so a ship entering the battlefield from a jump point



may not turn, fire any weapons, launch fighters, or use any Special Actions in the same turn, unless they have the Advanced Jump Point trait. In addition, it may not create a new jump point for the rest of the battle, as the jump engines require extensive recharging.

Jump points from hyperspace to realspace use the blue counters.

Jump Point Shock Waves

The immense energy required to rip a hole through the fabric of space to temporarily link hyperspace with realspace can be utterly lethal to any ship caught in the vortex. However, the precision required to turn this into a weapon is beyond the abilities of most fleets.

In order to direct jump point shock waves towards a ship in realspace, a number of conditions have to be fulfilled. First, only ships with the Advanced Jump Point trait may attempt this, and then only if an allied ship with the Scout trait is already deployed on the table. Finally, the ship must make a Crew Quality check when the Initiative Jump Point! Special Action is used, with a target number of 10. If this is unsuccessful, then the jump point has been mistimed or the location is not precise, meaning the energies are dispersed harmlessly into space.

If successful, any ship in realspace that is under the jump point counter or within 2" of its forward arc will suffer a 8 AD attack with Triple Damage.

Note that this only applies to jump points generated from hyperspace. Those generated in realspace focus their energies into hyperspace and will not have any effect on the battlefield. Jump gates will also not cause shock waves, as they are designed to safely harness the energies used.

Entering Hyperspace

To enter hyperspace, a ship must possess either the Jump Engine or Advanced Jump Engine traits, and perform the Initiate Jump Point! Special Action.

A ship initiating a jump point may only be moved between 0 and half its Speed. In addition, it may not fire any weapons. A jump point counter is placed anywhere in the front arc of the ship within 8", after the ship has been moved. No ship can enter a jump point on the turn it is created. The jump point will stay open for up to three turns so long as the ship continues to use the Initiate Jump Point! Special Action. During this time, any friendly ship or fighter flight moving into the jump point's forward arc (whether or not it has the Jump Engine trait itself) will be removed from the battlefield as it enters hyperspace.

As soon as the ship initiating the jump point moves onto the counter and enters hyperspace itself, or when three turns are over, the counter is removed. Once a jump point counter has been removed, the ship that created it may not initiate another one, as its jump engines have to recharge. Any ships leaving the table for hyperspace are considered to have made a Tactical Withdrawal unless entering hyperspace is a victory condition for the scenario being played.

Jump points from realspace to hyperspace use the yellow counters.

Jump Gates

Any ship within 8" of a jump gate may activate it and prepare to enter hyperspace by using the Initiative Jump Point! Special Action. While

attempting this Special Action, the ship may not fire any weapons and must move between 0 and half its Speed. If the jump gate is friendly or neutral, the attempt is automatic.

If the jump gate belongs to an enemy (as defined by the scenario being played), its controls must be over-ridden. This is done by making an opposed Crew Quality check, with the jump gate assumed to have a Crew Quality of 6.

A flight of fighters may open a jump gate by following the procedure above, but no Special Action is necessary. A flight of fighters cannot, however, open a jump gate belonging to an enemy.

Once activated, a jump gate will remain open for three turns, during which time any ships are free to use it. By simply moving onto the jump gate, a ship will be removed from the battlefield as it makes the jump to hyperspace. A ship must enter through the jump gate's forward arc.

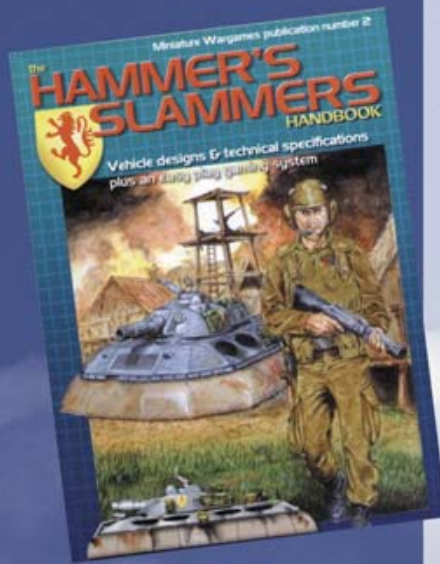
A jump gate must recharge for three turns after it has closed, before it may be opened once more.

Entering From Hyperspace

A jump gate may be opened from hyperspace in the same manner as detailed above. However, jump gates, like jump points, form a one way link between the two realities. You cannot enter realspace through the jump gate if it was opened by a ship in realspace and vice versa.

Jump gates safely channel the energy they control, and do not cause shock waves if they are opened from hyperspace in the way a jump point will.

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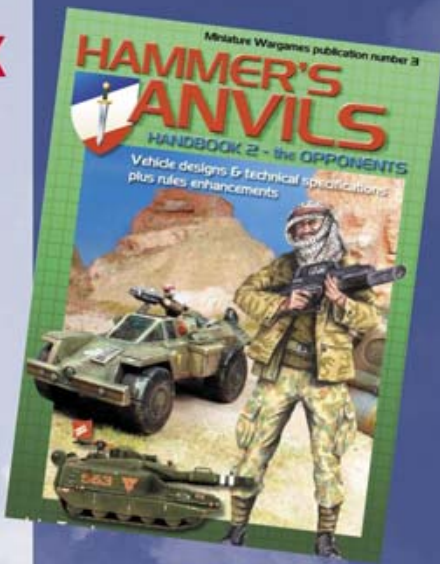
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DEATH IN THE CURSED EARTH

TAKE YOUR GAMES OUTSIDE THE MEGA-CITY PART ONE

Gary Berner

Death in the Cursed Earth is a spin-off game based on Gangs of Mega-City One, using Cursed Earth gangs instead of Mega-City One criminals.

Part One of this article (this month) introduces rules for Cursed Earth Gangs and an initial scenario. Future parts will add optional rules for mutations and vehicles, specialists, more scenarios, conversion instructions for models, Cursed Earth turf rules, and suggestions for mixing Cursed Earth gangs in games with city gangs.

The Cursed Earth

A barren, desolate, irradiated wasteland created during the Atomic Wars, this expanse occupies most of the former United States with only the mighty Mega-Cities standing as population centres. Over the years, however, it became obvious that a number of survivors were still living in the Cursed Earth. Shanty towns and isolated communities eke out an existence here. With technology being scarce, these people have regressed back to earlier forms of survival - a Cursed Earth community can resemble anything from a town in the Old West to a Stone Age tribal dwelling.

A weak community always has room for a strong leader, however, and many of these communities are ruled by self-styled tyrants or cult leaders.

Gangs of mutants and other outcasts roam the deserts, using whatever transportation they can scavenge. Preying on the settled areas and those brave enough to venture out of the Mega-Cities, these gangs form just one of the dangers in the Cursed Earth.

Further threat comes from the mutated wildlife. Animals grown to gigantic proportions and terrifying mutant strains of vermin abound, and it is unwise to venture into their domains without a serious offensive arsenal.

Because of these factors, much of the Cursed Earth consists of a number of territories "owned" by specific factions.

The rules presented in this article allow you to style your very own Cursed Earth faction - perhaps a gang from the Judge Dredd stories, such as the Slay-Riders, perhaps a group such as the Brotherhood of Trash, or perhaps a group of your own devising. As well as a new option for your Gangs of Mega-City One games, the modelling opportunities for creating your own unique gang of outcasts are varied and exciting - but more about that in a later part!

Creating Your Gang

In order to provide maximum flexibility for you to create the gang you have imagined, a number of options have been provided for customising your gang - far more than in city-based *Gangs* games. Note that the terminology “Gang” will be used throughout these rules to represent Gangs, Cults, or any other kind of group you may wish to build.

As with the normal rules, you begin with 10,000 credits with which to build your gang.

Gang Leader

Whether it is a powerful outcast or a charismatic cult leader, every gang has to have somebody in charge.

A Cursed Earth Gang may choose any one (and one only) of the following leaders for free:

Cult Leader

Using their natural charisma, these leaders persuade their followers to join them on religious grounds. Some may indeed believe what they preach, but others simply use the gullibility of their followers to manipulate them into performing their wishes.

Spd	Ag	Res	CC	Hts	WtF	Recruitment Cost	Rep
5"	5+	6	2D	1	3+	Free	8

Extra Resources

Through their charismatic ability to charm anyone out of anything, and the fact that they probably demanded every one of their members turn over everything they own upon joining the cult, Cult Leaders add an additional 2,500 credits to their gang's starting funds.

Natural Leader

See the *Gangs of Mega-City One* Rulebook for details on this ability.

Mutant Overlord

Blessed with physical abilities through mutation, the Mutant Overlord imposes his will upon his gang simply by being tougher than anyone else, and scaring them into submission whenever they question him.

Spd	Ag	Res	CC	Hts	WtF	Recruitment Cost	Rep
5"	4+	8	3D	2	2+	Free	5

Positive Mutations

The Mutant Overlord may automatically choose the “Physical Enhancement” mutation table (see part two of this article) when rolling for mutations. Alternatively, he may choose to take pot luck with the dice roll.

Mutant Psyker

Where the Overlord uses his physical prowess to dominate the gang, the Psyker uses his mental abilities. Born with an amazing gift, the Mutant Psyker wields amazing power, but often at the cost of physical ability.

Spd	Ag	Res	CC	Hts	WtF	Recruitment Cost	Rep
4"	3+	4	1D	1	3+	Free	5

Mental Ability

The Mutant Psyker always takes his first mutation roll (see part two of this article) on the “Psychic Ability” mutation table.

In addition, he may automatically choose the “Psychic Ability” mutation table when rolling for mutations. Alternatively, he may choose to take pot luck with the dice roll.

Top Dog

As per the *Gangs of Mega-City One* Rulebook, this can be used to represent any non-mutant, non-cultist gang leader, or the leader of a group of Cursed Earth townspeople just trying to defend themselves.

Gang Members

You may choose any of the following members for your Cursed Earth gang, in any combination.

Cursed Earth Citizen

The people of Cursed Earth settlements may take up arms for any number of reasons. Some are just defending their lands from incursion, while others may have been pressed into service by a gang leader, or recruited by a charismatic cult leader. Either way, fighting does not come naturally to them.

Spd	Ag	Res	CC	Hts	WtF	Recruitment Cost	Rep
5"	5+	4	1D	1	4+	400cr	0

Not a Fighter

The Cursed Earth Citizen can only use basic weapons with any real degree of success. If using anything other than a Close Combat, Pistol, or Rifle weapon they suffer a +1 penalty to Agility checks.

Outcast Punk

While some are not born to fight, the Outcast Punk lives for it. Seeking out a gang leader they respect (or possibly just the one who pays the most), they are the basic fighting unit of many gangs.

Spd	Ag	Res	CC	Hts	WtF	Recruitment Cost	Rep
5"	5+	6	2D	1	3+	1,000cr	1

Mutie

Radioactivity in the Cursed Earth is responsible for many strange mutations in human life - and in some cases it is possible to call into question whether the mutant originated from human stock at all.

Spd	Ag	Res	CC	Hts	WtF	Recruitment Cost	Rep
5"	5+	6	2D	1	3+	1,200cr	1

Mutation Bias

If rolling for mutations (see part two of this article), the Mutie is allowed to discard their first ever mutation and roll for a new one. This re-roll may only be used for the first mutation, and if not used is lost.



Equipment

Technology in the Cursed Earth is somewhat backwards, compared to life in the Mega-Cities. Some equipment is more widely available than others, while repair and maintenance facilities for high-tech items are pretty much impossible to find.

To represent this, any item of equipment costing 1,000cr or more has a chance of breaking down before each game.

Roll a D6 for each item of equipment that costs at least 1,000cr.

Item Cost	Chance of Breakdown
1,000-4,999cr	6+
5,000cr-9,999cr	5+
10,000cr+	4+

Note that items carried by specialists that do not have a cost associated with them do not break down unless specified otherwise in the text.

Repairs

A Cursed Earth gang may automatically repair any one broken item before the game starts (after rolling for breakdowns). Additional repairs may be performed by a new specialist, named the *Boffin*.

The Rules So Far...

Allow you to play one-off Cursed Earth battles between gangs. Next month we'll show you how to link these into a Campaign with the Cursed Earth Turf rules, as well as providing more specialists for you to use in your game.

Boffin

Perhaps an outcast scientist, or simply someone who found a stack of old technical journals to study, the Boffin is an important part of any Cursed Earth gang that wishes to use any form of technology. While their work is somewhat haphazard due to lack of knowledge in some areas or simply lack of materials and tools, they are all the Cursed Earth has to offer.



Spd	Ag	Res	CC	Hts	WtF	Recruitment Cost	Rep
5"	5+	5	1D	1	5+	5,000cr	0

Additional Repairs

For every Boffin in the gang, you may attempt to repair an additional item of equipment. Roll a D6 for each repair attempted - on a roll of 2-6 the Boffin has fixed the item. On a roll of 1 their repair attempt has failed miserably, and the item has been ruined - however, 25% of the item value can be used for *recycling* (see below).

Recycling

Boffins are adept at turning something into something else. The spear being wielded by that gang member used to be a rifle, until it ran out of ammunition, while that makeshift shotgun used to be a food blender..

Boffins may *recycle* any item in the gang inventory, turning it into *recycling credits* worth 25% of its original value. These recycling credits may be stored or spent, but can only be spent on equipment. It is assumed the Boffin is storing a stack of spare parts from this method, and using them to build equipment as it becomes necessary.



EYE ON MONGOOSE

Special Top Secret Release Details

As you all know from time to time we negotiate exciting new licenses, as well as expand upon those we already have. It's common knowledge that we have been looking for a fifth race for Starship Troopers for some time, and to commemorate the release later in the year of Starship Troopers Evolution, we can announce that after extensive negotiations with Sony that the fifth race will be the Raptors, genetically modified dinosaurs powered by nuclear fission.

More to come over the next few months, but suffice to say that these models will dwarf the previous releases seen for the game, meaning bigger tables and a host of new terrain.

We can hardly wait!



Playing with the Geometry of Shadows

Using the new Techno Mage Pinnacle in A Call to Arms

Matthew Sprange

Though they had only appeared in one episode (before the Son of the Equalizer made an appearance, of course), the Techno Mages have always caught the imagination of Babylon 5 fans. There is just something about their mystique, their self-imposed mission and, of course, their origins that grabs you.

All very well, but getting these extremely powerful individuals into a fleet action game is somewhat problematic! Who should they fight for? How will their spells work? And can one individual, no matter how powerful, really effect the course of an entire battle?

The rules we present here are intended for special scenario use only. There is no Techno Mage fleet list, nor are we planning one. No existing fleet list may freely use them as allies – they really are a ‘special’ unit which should only be used for one-off games. This, I think, will not be the problem it usually is with such ships, as I think there are many players who are just dying to take a crack at Techno Mages, even if it means not playing competitive games!



Techno Mage Pinnacle**Raid****Speed:** 10**Turn:** 2/45°**Hull:** 5**Damage:** 10/1**Crew:** 1**Troops:** -**Craft:** None**Special Rules:**

Advanced Jump Engine, Scout,

Stealth 6+

In Service: 2160+

The Order of the Techno Mages is a powerful, mysterious and almost mythical entity and their personal spacecraft even more so. Black, sleek and seamless they soar through the stars with neither heed nor care of the world around them. It is said that they can appear as they wish, creating images of comets and asteroids around themselves to cloak their presence.

Weapon	Range	Arc	AD	Special
Energy Blast	18	F	2	Precise, Super AP, Triple Damage

* Fleets featuring nothing but Techno Mage Pinnaces have a +5 bonus to Initiative, and their ships never suffer Crew Damage. They always have a Crew Quality of 6 and use the Shadows' Hyperspace Mastery special rules.

Dreamers and Shapers

As a Special Action, a Techno Mage ship can do one of the following.

- Regain 1D6 lost Damage automatically.
- Instantly move 10" in any direction and face any heading. With a successful Crew Quality check (target 10), may also create two 'dummy' Techno Mage ships. The player does *not* have to announce which is the real ship. Each dummy ship will move and take damage as normal, and will stay on the table until the Techno Mage performs another Special Action or attacks, or is destroyed. The dummy ships must stay within 20" of the real ship, or be instantly removed. Dummy ships may not attack or use Special Actions.
- Use the Shadow's Jump Engine Disruptor special rule, to a range of 12".
- Prepare to deflect incoming attacks. If attacked by a Beam weapon, make a Crew Quality check (target 8). If successful, the Beam attack is reflected back to the attacking ship – roll its Attack Dice against this new target instead. Every subsequent Beam weapon reflected will cause the target number of the Crew Quality check to be raised by +1.

Techno Mage Pinnacle

Hunting the “Beast”



Operations with the Tirpitz in the North Atlantic, November 1941

David Manley

The campaign rules in VaS are necessarily simplified and, whilst they have the feel of a strategic campaign setting they don't really capture the essence of an operational campaign. The aim of this article is to present a set of simple naval campaign rules that can be used to run an operation without the need to have someone umpire the campaign (and let's face it, being an umpire is a pretty thankless task at the best of times, and most gamers I know would be far happier playing rather than reffing!). The setting for this campaign is the projected breakout of the German battleship *Tirpitz* and heavy cruiser *Scheer* into the North Atlantic in November 1941, although they could be easily adapted to other periods (or even other systems - they would work fine in an SF setting). At this stage of the war the USA was still officially neutral, although US battleships were actively patrolling in the Denmark Straits, and several US ships had already been sunk by German U-boats, most notably the destroyer *Reuben James*.

The problem with most naval campaigns of this sort is reconciling hidden movement with the need to perform detection attempts. Without an umpire to help out this is problematical when there are only two players involved. The system suggested below works because some particular circumstances are in play. First, the weather in the North Atlantic in November is particularly bad. This could, easily mean that ships of opposing sides could be in close proximity yet not see each other. Radar was also in its infancy and could not be counted upon to make a detection. Both sides made extensive use of ELINT (electronic intelligence), which was quite effective at revealing the location (or at least the presence) of searching aircraft, or of communications between ships and other ships or land based operation centres. This is the rationale behind the rules requiring disclosure of searching units.

The location of the convoys is disclosed because it is assumed that U-boats or long range recon aircraft (such as the Fw200 Condor) are in contact.

Whilst these conditions are fairly specific to this campaign similar circumstances exist in other periods that would allow a similar method to be used (an easy example would be the Bismarck chase, but obvious parallels exist in modern naval campaigns where disclosure of searching units would imply the use of active sensors).

Background

November 1941 – Tensions between the USA and Germany are running high. In Germany, Hitler publicly warns: “Let there be no mistake - whoever believes that he can help Britain must realise one thing above all: Every ship, with or without convoy, that comes within range of our torpedo tubes, will be torpedoed.” Privately, the Fuehrer says to Admiral Raeder, “I will never call a submarine commander to account if he torpedoes an American ship by mistake. After the Eastern campaign I reserve the right to take severe action against the USA...” In September 1941 Roosevelt issues orders to shoot on sight any ship interfering with American shipping.

Having recovered from the Bismarck debacle earlier in the year, the German high command decided that, once more, its battleships should strike in the North Atlantic. This time the *Tirpitz* was to sortie, accompanied initially by the *Admiral Scheer* (which may be detached to sortie independently). At least two Allied convoys are believed to be at sea, and information on their progress should be available via shadowing U-boats. The British patrols in the Denmark Straits are being supplemented by so-called neutrality patrols conducted by the USN. These are believed to be anything but neutral - The US Navy has been escorting merchant ships, including those of “any nationality which may join”, between Iceland and the US. The USN has also developed a base at Hvalfjord to support these tasks.

Note – this scenario is based on actual German plans for November 1941. In the event the operation was cancelled due to mechanical failure, but the possibility of a clash between German and US battleships in the wastes of the North Atlantic is too good an opportunity to pass up!

Scales

Each campaign turn is 6 hours long. Each hex on the campaign map is 100 miles across.

Axis Forces

Start at Trondheim (G35)

Tirpitz, Scheer, Uckermark

Allied Naval Forces and Convoys

US Task Group 1.3 (RAdm Giffen) <i>Starts at Reykjavik (F22)</i>	RN Home Fleet (Admiral Tovey) <i>Starts at Scapa Flow (K30)</i>
Idaho (BB)	King George V (BB)
Mississippi (BB)	Victorious (CV)
Tuscaloosa (CA)	Norfolk (CA)
Wichita (CA)	Berwick (CA)
Gwin (DD)	Nigeria (CL)
Meredith (DD)	Sheffield (CL)
Monssen (DD)	Cossack (DD)
	Zulu (DD)
	Sikh (DD)
	Piorun (DD)

Allied Convoys

Convoy HX 158 <i>Starts at hex V2</i>	Convoy SC53 <i>Starts at hex R8</i>
40 transports	35 transports
Escort Group EG 4.14.4 (RCN)	Escort Group TU 4.1.8 (USN)
Ottawa (DD)	Buck (DD)
Dauphin (DE)	Ludlow (DD)
Arvida (DE)	McCormick (DD)
Algoma (DE)	Greer (DD)
Support Group (RN)	Woolsey (DD)
Burnham (DD)	Wilkes (DD)
Chambley (DE)	
Matapedia (DD)	
Napanee (DE)	

Objectives

- The German player must attempt to sink as many transports as possible.
- The allied player must try to get the convoys to Liverpool (O30).

Turn sequence

1. Determine formation
2. Roll for weather
3. Move convoys
4. Roll for convoy location – if successful declare locations to German player
5. Initiate refuelling
6. Roll for “at sea” refuelling location - if successful reveal location to Allied player
7. Check shadowing vessels
 - a. Check for evasion or engagement of shadowing vessels
 - b. Shadowed and shadowing vessels move together
 - c. Shadowing player informed of location of shadowed vessels
8. Move other vessels
9. Announce and resolve searches
10. Announce vessels in enemy’s Land Based Air (LBA) areas
11. Execute air strikes if in range or if in enemy LBA area, and if weather/daylight permits
12. Surface actions – roll for encounter, surprise etc.
13. Check vessel endurance

Formations

At the start of each turn players must decide what formation their ships are cruising in. If they are encountered by the enemy then this formation determines their starting positions (unless they have achieved surprise, in which case they may set up as desired).

Weather

Each turn the Allied player rolls to determine the weather conditions. On a roll of 1-4 the weather is Good, otherwise the weather is Bad. If the previous weather was Bad add 1 to the die roll.

Movement and Endurance

The table below gives movement rates per turn in hexes depending on the speed of the fastest ship in the group. Convoys are assumed to have a speed of 9 knots (VAS speed = 2).

All ships (except the convoy and the German auxiliary *Uckermark*, which ignore these Endurance rules) have a fuel capacity of 60 units. Each turn that a ship moves it uses the number of fuel points listed below. When a ship expends all of its fuel units it may only move at a maximum speed of 10 knots (but expends no fuel) – it may not conduct searches and it must head for the nearest friendly port to refuel. German ships may refuel from the *Uckermark*. Refuelling at a base takes 24 hours (4 turns). Refuelling at sea takes 1 turn to complete, during which the auxiliary and the fuelled ship(s) may not move. There is a chance that ULTRA intercepts may reveal the location of the refuelling. Roll a d6 on the turn that refuelling takes place, and each turn thereafter until a successful roll is made. On a roll of 1-2 the location of the refuelling point is revealed (note: the allied player may learn of this many hours after the event!)

Detection

a) Convoys

The convoys are being observed by U-boats and Condor recon aircraft. Each turn roll a d6 for each convoy. The allied player must reveal the location of the convoy on a score of 4+.

Each turn that a convoy location is declared roll a d10. On a score of 10 a ship has been torpedoed and sunk. If there are enemy heavy units (cruisers or larger) in the same hex roll a d6 - on a 5+ the ship torpedoed is a warship. Choose at random which heavy unit is hit and resolve damage normally.

Ship Speed (knots)	8 or less	9-17	18-27	28+
VaS Speed	1”	2”-3”	4”-5”	6”+
Movement	1 hex on odd turns	1 hex per turn	1 hex on odd turns 2 hexes on even turns	2 hexes per turn
Fuel Points Used	1	2	3	4

b) Warship Searches

Each player now declares whether they are searching. Surface ships can search the hex they are in. Ships that carry aircraft are able to search further afield, depending on weather and daylight conditions. Ships with operable seaplanes can search the hex they are in plus those immediately adjacent while carrier planes can search out to two hexes. Players must declare which hexes they are searching in (but need not declare what is searching). Thus searching reveals some information on the likely locations of enemy forces. The ability to use aircraft depends on the time of day and weather:

Type	CV	Seaplane
Daylight	Yes (out to 2 hexes)	Yes (out to 1 hex)
Twilight	Yes (out to 1 hex)	No
Night, Bad Weather	No	No

Search Results

If a search is declared in a hex occupied by an enemy surface force roll a d6. The force is located on a roll of 3+ in daylight, 4+ in twilight or 5+ at night or in bad weather. Convoys are always detected, regardless of weather and daylight. The roll is made by the player who owns the surface force (this should be a hidden roll and should be made whether or not there are any ships there). If a successful roll is made those ships present are declared, as is the scouting unit that conducted the search.

Land Based Air Searches and Attacks

Both sides are assumed to have decent air patrols in sea areas along their coasts. If enemy shipping appears in these hexes they are automatically detected (whether day, night or bad weather) - their presence is immediately declared. If they are detected during daylight or twilight and the weather is good they may be attacked by land based aircraft (other than this land based air strikes take no part in the game). Allied air attacks take place anywhere the perimeter of hexes marked "B", "I" or "U" on the map (flying from Britain, Iceland or the USA respectively). Luftwaffe attacks take place anywhere within the perimeter marked G. Both Allied and German aircraft can attack in hexes marked "BG".

To determine the number of flights in land based air strikes roll a d6 and consult the table below:

Die Roll	Allied ("B" Hexes)	Allied ("I" Hexes)	Allied ("U" Hexes)	German
1	Beaufighter x 3	Hudson x 2	B17 x 3	He111x23 Ju87 x 2
2	Beaufighter x 2	Beaufighter x 2	B17 x 3	Ju88 x 2 Ju87 x 1
3	Hudson x 2	Hudson x 2	Hudson x 3	Ju88 x 3
4	Hudson x 3	Hudson x 3	Hudson x 3	Ju88 x 3
5	Swordfish x 3	Hudson x 3	B17 x 3	Ju88 x 3
6*	Wellington x 3	Hudson x 3	Hudson x 4	He111 x 3

Carrier Air Strikes

If a player has a carrier in range of an enemy ship (within 2 hexes) they may launch an air strike. This is resolved immediately. Note that the *Victorious* has enough ordnance to allow each Swordfish flight to make 2 torpedo attacks, and all aircraft to make 4 bombing attacks

Surface Actions

If a surface force detects another in the same hex the two forces may fight a surface action (unless both opt to withdraw). Run through the following procedure to determine whether an action ensues, and whether one side achieves surprise over the other.

1. Has one side achieved Surprise?

Each player rolls a d6, adding 2 if they have active radar, +2 if they have CAP, ASW or search planes in the hex. If one side's score exceeds the enemy score by 6 or more then they have achieved surprise.

If one side has achieved surprise they have the option of withdrawing (hiding in the gloom and avoiding detection by the enemy) or shadowing (remaining in contact to report the enemy's position). If they take this option they remain in the hex, but they stay far enough away to stay out of contact (it is assumed that they make optimum use of poor visibility to remain undetected whilst keeping their opponents under observation). If they achieve surprise but decide not to withdraw or shadow they may attack the enemy. They set up in any desired formation at the extreme limit of visibility (or greater if using radar) - the opposition must be in fleet formation - and the surprising side gets one free round of gunnery before the opposition wakes up and can return fire.

2. Desire for Action?

Do either side want an action? If neither do, both forces remain in the same hex but no combat occurs. If both sides wish to engage the other then set up in their respective formations at the limit of visibility, or extreme radar range (whichever is longer - see tables below). If one side wishes to disengage it may do so automatically if its speed exceeds that of the fastest enemy vessel. It may begin shadowing if desired.

3. Fighting the Action

The surface action is played out. Ships may be declared as disengaged if they remain out of contact with the enemy for more than half an hour.

4. Avoided Contact

If a force avoids contact because managed to disengage as above it must vacate the hex in the next turn, and may not do so across any hex side through which enemy ships entered last turn. The enemy player announces which hex sides are deemed "closed".

Shadowing

Shadowing vessels move with the vessels they are shadowing and report their location. Shadowed vessels and their shadowers are moved before unshadowed ships so that the latter may take advantage of the information received. However, before movement a shadowed vessel may attempt to shake off its shadower. Repeat the process for determining if the groups are aware of each other, but apply a +2 modifier to the search die roll. If the search result roll is failed the shadowed vessels are lost; the shadowing vessel is moved as normal; if the shadower remains in contact roll again for surprise; if the shadowing vessel is surprised the shadowed vessels can either slip away as above, or can engage their shadower.

Example:

Tirpitz and *Admiral Scheer* enter a hex containing the British heavy cruiser *Norfolk*. It is night and foggy (bad weather), but the British cruiser has radar.

Each player rolls a d6 to determine surprise, the British adding 2 to their score as they have radar. Both sides roll a '3', so no surprise is achieved. The Germans want to engage the cruiser, but it is faster than both the *Tirpitz* and the *Admiral Scheer*, so no action occurs.

In subsequent turns the British cruiser shadows the Germans, whilst *King George V* and *Victorious* close the distance. However, in a subsequent turn, *Tirpitz* attempts to shake off her shadower. Again it is night. The detection roll is 2; even with the +2 modifier for shadowing the final score is only 4 - not enough to retain detection, so *Tirpitz* steals away from her shadowers.

U-Boat attacks

Each turn that a convoy location is declared roll a d10. On a score of 10 a ship has been torpedoed and sunk. If there are enemy heavy units (cruisers or larger) in the same hex roll a d6 - on a 5+ the ship torpedoed is a warship. Choose at random which heavy unit is hit and resolve damage normally.

Ending the game

The game ends when any of the following occur:

- 1) All German ships are sunk or return to Trondheim (G35) or Brest (S29)
- 2) All transport ships in both convoys are sunk
- 3) The convoys reach Liverpool (although the Allied player may opt to continue the game in order to catch the Germans on their way back to port)

Victory Conditions

Real warfare often doesn't have the benefit of niceties such as victory conditions (it leaves little for the historians to argue about later!), so there aren't any for this scenario. Obviously the Germans will lose if *Tirpitz* is sunk, the Allies if either convoy suffers heavy casualties. However, if the results fall between these extremes the players are advised to retire to the bar and to continue the "propaganda war" there!

Ship Stats

The VaS rules include stats for the following ships.

- Tirpitz (BB) – Bismarck class
- Scheer (CA) – Deutschland class
- King George V (BB) – KGV class
- Victorious (CV) – Illustrious class
- Norfolk (CA) – Norfolk class
- Berwick (CA) – Norfolk class
- Nigeria (CL) – Use Fiji
- Sheffield (CL) – Southampton class
- Cossack (DD) – Tribal class
- Zulu (DD) – Tribal class
- Sikh (DD) – Tribal class
- Piorun (DD) – J/K/N class
- Tuscaloosa (CA) – New Orleans class

Stats for other ships are as follows:

Uckermark - use "Victory" class cargo ship

Allied transports – "Liberty" class

Stats for the following ships follow in part two, next month

Idaho (BB) - New Mexico Class

Mississippi (BB) – New Mexico Class

Wichita (CA) – Wichita Class

Gwin (DD) – Benson / Gleaves Class

Meredith (DD) – Benson / Gleaves Class

Monssen (DD) – Benson / Gleaves Class

Ottawa (DD) – H Class

Dauphin (DE) – Flower class

Arvida (DE) – Flower class

Algoma (DE) – Flower class

Burnham (DD) – Clemson Class

Chambley (DE) – Flower Class

Matapedia (DD) – Flower Class

Napanee (DE) – Flower class

Buck (DD) – Sims Class

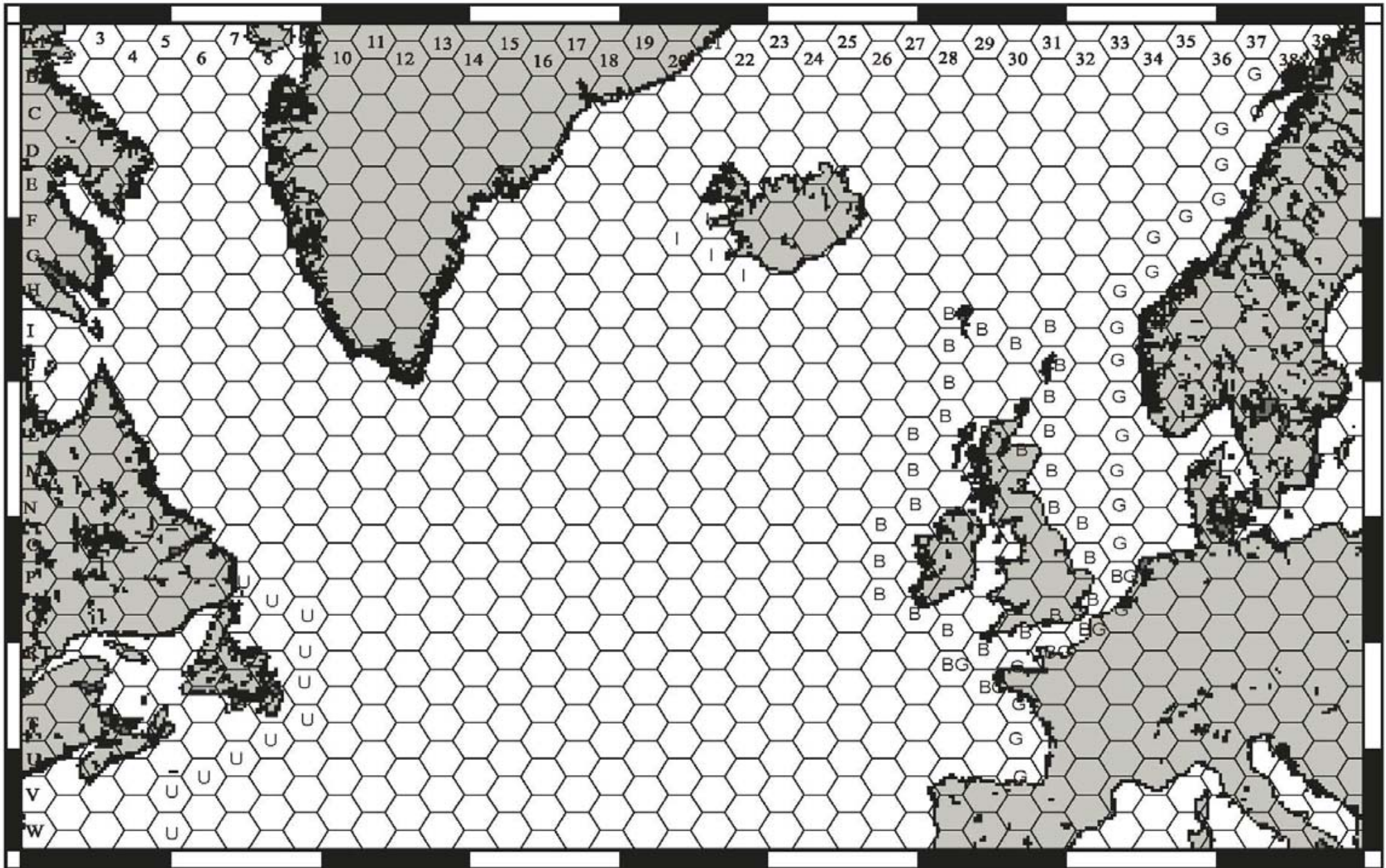
Ludlow (DD) – Benson / Gleaves Class



Turn Record

Date	00:00-06:00 (Night)	06:00-12:00 (Twilight)	12:00 – 18:00	18:00 –24:00 (Night)
1 st Nov				
2 nd Nov				
3 rd Nov				
4 th Nov				
5 th Nov				
6 th Nov				
7 th Nov				
8 th Nov				
9 th Nov				
10 th Nov				
11 th Nov				
12 th Nov				
13 th Nov				
14 th Nov				
15 th Nov				
16 th Nov				
17 th Nov				
18 th Nov				
19 th Nov				
20 th Nov				

North Atlantic Campaign Map



KELLERMAN'S KODIAKS



Background on the Exosuit Platoon

Bryan Steele

The Kodiaks are among the top heralded Exosuit platoons in all of the Mobile Infantry, having accumulated a massive number of Valorous Unit, Mobile Infantry Cross and Legion of Merits medals for their many successful drops. Their private dropship, the *Lancelot*, keeps a dedicated trophy vault that contains all of their awarded medals and writs of commendation, not to mention quite a few Arachnid body parts kept to 'show the kids back home'. Even though any of them could easily call it quits and retire with a lapel full of gold and silver accolades, they tend to serve hard and strong from their first drop all the way until they buy the farm. Never give up, and never let off the trigger...that is the mindset of a Kodiak.

One of the clean up platoons sent to the Gobicahn Campaign, Kellerman's Kodiaks is a force all to themselves once dropped into the hot zone. Used to reclaim lost ground in a situation gone bad, they are almost always dropped directly into the thick of the worst battles – and would have it no other way.

After all, that's where the bugs are. . .

LIEUTENANT LOU KELLERMAN

Growing up to become a semi-professional jumpball player in Chicago, Lou Kellerman built himself into a fortress of muscle and determination. His short stint (which was cut short due to his recruitment into the MI) as a jumpball lineman left him with the firm chin and steely eyes he has used to intimidate even the hardest of SICON agents throughout his nine-year career. Rising through the ranks inside the cockpit of an M8 Marauder, Lou was one of the first to sign up for the new M4A2 Cougar Exosuits when they became available outside of Starside R&D. Enjoying the protection and mobility of the new machine, he demanded that his entire unit be outfitted with Exosuits as soon as SICON could make it happen. He promised it would be well worth the cost. Pulling a few strings with



some of his old poker buddies in the Colonel's office, Kellerman's was one of the first Exosuit platoons. With his firm leadership and dedication, he proved to them all how right he was.

Lou is a forceful leader, expecting nothing but the best out of his Troopers. He enjoys sponsoring a good inter-unit jumpball game now and again to keep spirits and competition high between his 'team mates'. To make sure they know he trusts them and their training, he personally leads his platoon into battle whenever possible. He feels his presence is no different than having Blake 'Walter' Payton on the Chicago bench during the AJL

finals – sometimes having the ‘boss’ nearby is enough to drive the team to higher aspirations. He has commanded over two dozen hostile drops himself from behind the trigger of his Sixgun, and has rejected several promotions in the process. Anything that would take him out of his Cougar and put him in a war room is not even an option for this officer.

Kellerman, against the suggestions of his superiors, continues to spray paint his old jumpball jersey number, 77, in bright orange on the front and back of his Exosuit. They claim it makes him an easier target. He claims it is for luck. They say it is counterproductive to camouflage. He says it brings ‘team spirit’. Although they could likely order him to cease the practice, they have not – as some arguments are never quite worth the effort it takes to win them. Although seen as a bit unorthodox and brash in the field, Lieutenant Kellerman and his recognisable Exosuit earn record ratings anytime his platoon is shown in action on the FedNet battle broadcasts.

From a very early age, all Lou ever wanted to be was the leader of a great team of players that would bring home the win under his coaching. Now he is that leader, his platoon is that team, and he knows that one day – with or without him – the Kodiaks will bring home the win for all of Mankind.

‘I don’t care what those SICON spooks say, three nukes is less expensive than even one of my Kodiaks buying the farm. You get ‘em, or I’ll be back here with my 77s on!’

— Lt. Lou Kellerman to MI Munitions Officer

PLATOON STRUCTURE

The Kodiaks tend to be dominated by the heavier Grizzly Exosuits for their added firepower. Kellerman himself pilots one of only a few scattered Cougars in the platoon, commonly used by NCOs and sergeants for their added tactical mobility. Always attached to the *Lancelot* dropship, the Kodiaks are rarely brought to a battle in any way other than an orbit-launched drop. It is their job, and they love it.

With their primary enemy being the Arachnid menace, the Kodiaks lean heavily toward quantity of direct fire over the fancier weaponry SICON

has placed at their disposal. With dozens of Sixgun rotary cannons roaring away into the masses of bugs headed toward them, only the heaviest of Arachnids can make much headway under the withering hail of fire. When something just will not fall down, Kellerman always keeps at least one unit of all-Firestorm Grizzlies ready to unleash a hail of deadly missiles. If the situation calls for it, and a hole *must* be made, Kellerman is often liberal with his use of missile support from the *Lancelot* – even blasting the landscape bare with a nuke if the situation calls for it. If it brings more troopers home and sends more of those damned Arachnids to whatever hell they deserve...the Kodiaks will do it every time!

TACTICS

There are three primary tactics that Kellerman’s Kodiaks have been taught to use in order to win any engagement against any foe: Firepower. Firepower. Firepower.

Kellerman comes from a generation of Mobile Infantry that remembers the initial slaughter of colonies from the first contacts with the Arachnids, and he has only one good solution for them - wipe ‘em out, all of ‘em. Trading in their air support from the ‘prissy flyboys’ for cases upon cases of Sixgun ammo for most engagements, the Kodiaks answer battlefield situations with relentless, blistering gunfire. The Kodiaks are true battlefield heroes when they are given the freedom and the ammunition to



work things out *their* way. They are tough, gritty, and unafraid to go that extra mile if it means sending a few more bugs to the grave – making a few more metres of some faraway world safe for Mankind’s expansion.

The platoon motto of ‘Run ‘em Dry!’ is not just an ideology, but also a trained combat response for the members of the Kodiaks. Undoing what he considers to be a SICON accounting management worry, Kellerman explains to his units that they are *expected* to come home with as little ammunition as possible. He will personally bet a real steak dinner against any Trooper who thinks they can run their suit empty, and has been called in to pay that due several times. Considering such a feat means not only that the trooper came back to celebrate, but also that over 4,000 rounds were fired into the enemy – it is a debt he is more than willing to pay in full every time.

Even though it seems unlikely to occur against the wall of Sixgun fire Kodiak units hurl at the teeming bugs, the platoon is also trained for close-combat fighting. Laser knives, point-blank shots and even stomping and punching are not unheard of when the bugs are clawing at an Exosuit’s visor. Even so, every Kodiak knows exactly where the foot trigger to his Hellseed rack is in case they are ever truly overrun. It is dangerous and risky to be so close to the enemy, but Kellerman teaches that they must be ready to do anything to come home in one piece. Anything less will cost lives, and he will not be having any of that in his platoon.



Oddly taking some of the ‘mobile’ out of the Mobile Infantry, the Kodiaks tend to form linear firing groups and move slowly across the battlefield. Moving like a forest fire across enemy territory, they herd the bugs under a hail of Sixgun and Firestorm fire into one area and hold them there as best they can – while Kellerman calls in for the nukes. When the flash dies down and the smoke clears, anything still whole is shot to bits, just to be sure. The MI tactics classrooms at officer training have nicknamed the tactic the ‘Kellerman Kill Corral’. It has become a standard battlefield formation for Exosuit squads, and the Kodiaks laugh to themselves every time the term pops up in pre-drop briefings.

The Kodiaks’ attitude of ‘survival through superior firepower’ comes directly from their Lieutenant, who does not seem to understand the term ‘overkill’. If it cannot be dealt with by hundreds of .50 calibre ammo topped off with a Pee-Wee...then Kellerman repeats the process. Even Bug Central on Gobicahn fell after three layers of this manoeuvre – making it worthwhile, even if the whole area will glow in the dark long enough for his grandchildren to see.

THE GOBICAHN CAMPAIGN

The platoon was called in to bolster the defence of Gobicahn hot zones when several enormous transport bugs brought hordes of deadly Arachnids to the refugee staging areas. Kellerman’s Kodiaks dropped in right on the triangulated centre of where a new Bug Central was being established just days after the transport bugs landed. Guns blazing and missiles at the ready, Lou and his forces pushed against the tide of warriors for days.

Using superior firepower and what some SICON bean counters believe to be ‘excessive’ amounts of tactical nuclear munitions launched from the *Lancelot* and the unit’s selected Firestorms, the Kodiaks made their stand. Effectively creating three huge smouldering walls of chitin and molten flesh out of the three transport bugs, they were able to hold their ground. Using these Arachnid ‘bunkers’ as funnel points to create one massive kill zone for the bugs as they emerged from their rapidly collapsing tunnel network (thanks to assistance from the 14th White Khan Pathfinders), the Kodiaks dug in their heels and turned the whole area into a muddy, ichor-soaked swamp of bug bodies.

‘Occasionally,’ Kellerman joked afterwards, ‘I was calling in those bomber blankets just to clear out the dead so we could get to the ones hiding behind ‘em!’



With no support and no way to escape for the bugs, the Kodiaks were able to scour Bug Central of Arachnid infestation, earning a fistful of medals and promotions for the entire platoon for their bravery and valour.

Similar missions like their combat drop onto Gobicahn appear up and down the Kodiaks' esteemed record, many of their missions classified 'black ops' by SICON command. They have been repeatedly dropped into enemy-controlled territory without any backup, they showed up on Tophet after the presence of bugs was determined and verified as a pacification force, and they frequently patrol the Kulai border in search of Arachnid invaders.

These men and women are true heroes that do not know the word 'quit'. Tossing their glittering ribbons and bars into the trophy room on the *Lancelot*, the Kodiaks are known to sign up for their next campaign before the barrels in their Sixguns are even cool. There is a reason why Kellerman is so attached to his platoon and their brutally difficult missions...

...they never cease to make him proud to be part of the Mobile Infantry.

'Make 'em sing and run 'em dry!'

— pre-engagement motto of Kellerman's Kodiaks

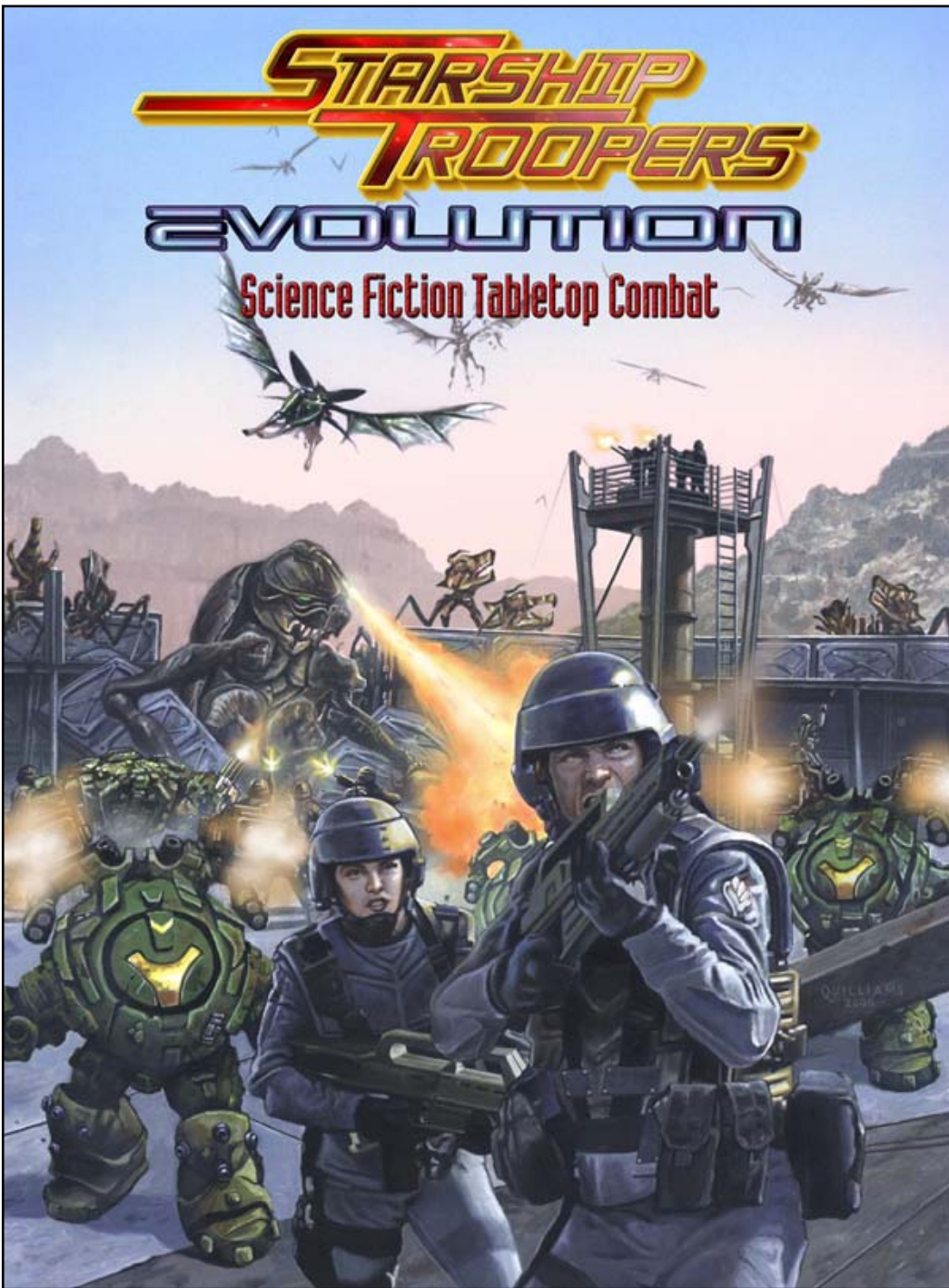
EXOSUIT VISUAL DESIGNS

Often deployed to deal with Arachnid turf, Kellerman's Kodiaks tend to keep their Exosuit paintjobs to blacks and browns to match with what most Arachnid-owned planets look like after they have been scoured of non-bug lifeforms. While camouflage is all but useless against the common bug, the colour scheme also proves useful when dealing with night-based missions when deployed – however rarely – against Skinnies, or rogue human settlements.

This is often modified personally by each Exo-jock with a general 'claws and teeth' motif that they paint upon the arms and helmet-areas of their suits, a throwback to their Lieutenant's favourite ancient American football team. Even though they use image-recognition software to designate each other, such personalisation helps each Kodiak find his personal Exosuit if there is an unexpected scramble aboard the *Lancelot*.

Every member of the Kodiaks has a bold emblazon of a large bear's claw on the right breast of their suits and uniforms, and many of them personally get the symbol tattooed on them as well for dress-uniform events... on the sides of their necks where it can be seen above their collars when standing at attention. The symbol has become their mark of membership after a member's first hot-zone drop...even if must they add it posthumously to any platoon members that do not make it home.

The only exception to this is Kellerman himself, whose Cougar Exosuit is left a bare gun metal grey except for a pair of brilliant orange 77s on the back and chest in homage to his old jumpball jersey number. Some of his older veteran NCOs and Sergeants have talked about adding numbers of their own to their own Exosuits to further Kellerman's idea of a 'team atmosphere'. It is unspoken, however, that should Kellerman ever *retire* – in the only way that a career Exo-jock ever does – his number goes with him, just like the heroes of the sports world.



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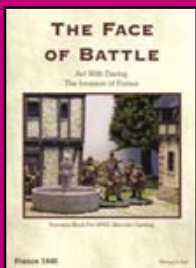
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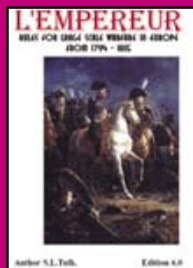
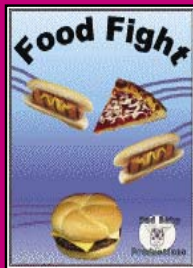
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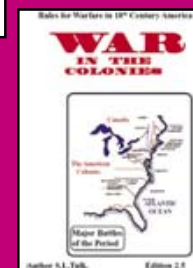
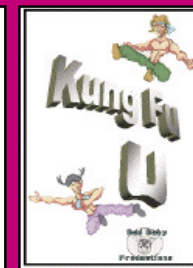
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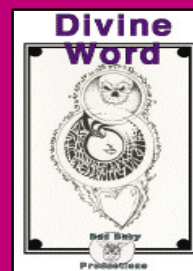


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THE ZAPASNOVAN WAR

The Conflict Escalates in Part Two of Our Series of Linked Scenarios

Matt Thomason

SCENARIO SIX - BREAKING THE LINES

Over the next few weeks, the battle lines were drawn and re-drawn as the PLA pushed deeper into Zapasnovan territory, just for the EFTF forces to push them back once more. The PLA forces reorganised for an attempt to focus their forces and break through the EFTF lines in multiple locations. This scenario represents one of a dozen near-identical battles across the front.

EFTF BRIEFING

A PLA force has been detected near your location. While it outnumberes you, your objective is only to delay it long enough for additional units to be mobilised and reinforce your position.

Units

Two British Army Infantry Sections (both teams)
One British Army Challenger II MBT

PLA BRIEFING

You have only a limited amount of time to breach the EFTF lines at this position. Your forces are massed for breaking through, while theirs are spread out – as soon as you attack, however, the call will go out for reinforcements. Simply breaking through the lines is not enough – any enemy units left behind will surely report your heading to their commanders, and your effort will be wasted. You must eliminate all opposition quickly.

Units

Two PLA Infantry Squads (all three teams)
Two PLA WZ-551 IFVs

SETUP

Divide the table into 12" by 12" sections. Players take turns placing an item of scenery of their choice into each section until the table is full. Each section may only contain a single scenery item.

SPECIAL RULES

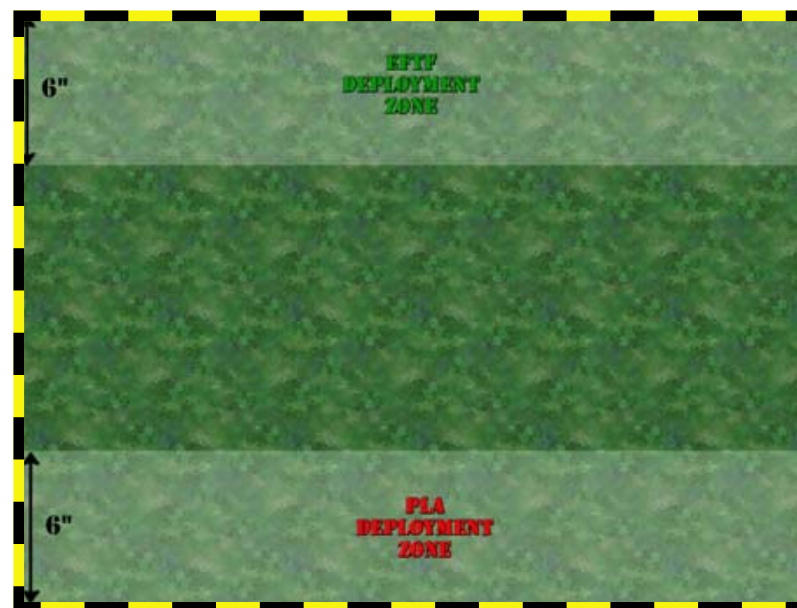
There are no special rules in effect for this scenario.

SCENARIO LENGTH

The scenario plays for six turns, or until one side has been defeated.

POINTS MATCH

If playing with points, each player may spend up to 750 points on any units they wish.



SCENARIO SEVEN – ROAD RACE

An EFTF Warrior and a PLA WZ-551 attempt to take the same route during their respective transport missions. Will the victory go to the faster PLA vehicle, or the more heavily armed Warrior?

EFTF BRIEFING

You must eliminate or outrun the enemy vehicle and then continue to your objective.

Units

One British Army Warrior APC

PLA BRIEFING

The enemy vehicle must be destroyed or disabled. Alternatively, simply outrun it.

Units

One PLA WZ-551 IFV

SETUP

Place no scenery for this scenario. The table is assumed to represent an area of flat land. A road may be added for cosmetic reasons, but has no effect. This scenario is designed for a table around 48" long. As there are only two units, you could easily play this on the floor if you do not have a table long enough. The vehicles are placed 6" apart on a short table edge.

SPECIAL RULES

Both vehicles are assumed to be traveling towards the opposite short table edge. If either vehicle reaches this edge, you should "roll back" both units by moving them both 24" towards the starting edge. If this causes one vehicle to fall off the starting edge of the table, that player immediately loses as they have been outrun by their opponent. A player that voluntarily moves off the long table edges or the starting edge of the table automatically loses the scenario.

Neither vehicle may make more than one move action per turn.

SCENARIO LENGTH

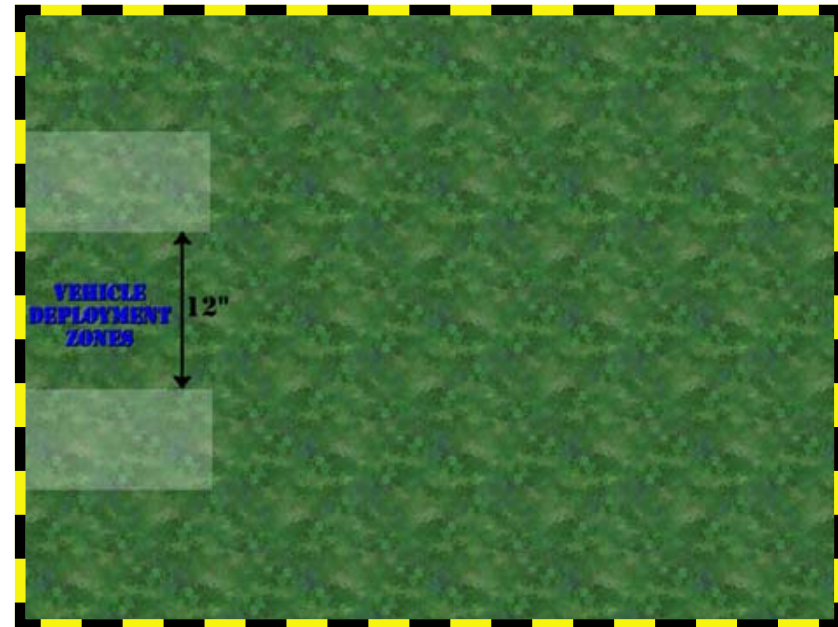
The scenario plays until one player is defeated.

POINTS MATCH

If playing a points match, each player may take one ground vehicle unit costing no more than 200 points. No other models are allowed, even if usually part of the unit. It may be interesting to try this out with MEA Technicals...

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Shattering rules do not apply. Players may only win by destroying the enemy vehicle or by outrunning it.



The scenarios in this article are designed to follow on in a linked set from part one in last month's issue of *Signs and Portents Wargamer*. However, you may play them individually if you wish. Points values are given as alternatives to the predefined forces. We've also thrown in a few ideas for playing outside the normal victory rules – hopefully this will inspire you to experiment with your own special scenarios.

SCENARIO EIGHT – A BRIDGE TOO SHORT

PLA supply lines into the core of the fighting currently rely on a single route across the Melinki bridge. An EFTF force has been dispatched to destroy this objective, thus slowing the PLA advance.

EFTF BRIEFING

Destroying the bridge is a relatively simple exercise, just so long as you can hold the PLA defensive force off for long enough to plant explosives.

Units

One British Army Infantry Command Section
Two British Army Warrior APCs
One British Army Infantry Section (both teams)
One British Army Challenger II MBT

PLA BRIEFING

Whoever holds this bridge controls the majority of supplies to the front line – you must hold it at all costs.

Units

Three PLA Infantry Squads (all three teams)
One PLA Type 99 MBT

SETUP

Place a river across the middle of the table, lengthwise. A bridge is placed halfway along this river. Each side may place scenery as they see fit on their own side of the river.

SPECIAL RULES

In order to successfully destroy the bridge, the EFTF player must take three consecutive ready actions with any infantry unit that has at least one model in contact with the bridge. Each of these ready actions will provoke a reaction as normal. The chain of ready actions may be broken by suppression, or by making a reaction against an enemy unit.

SCENARIO LENGTH

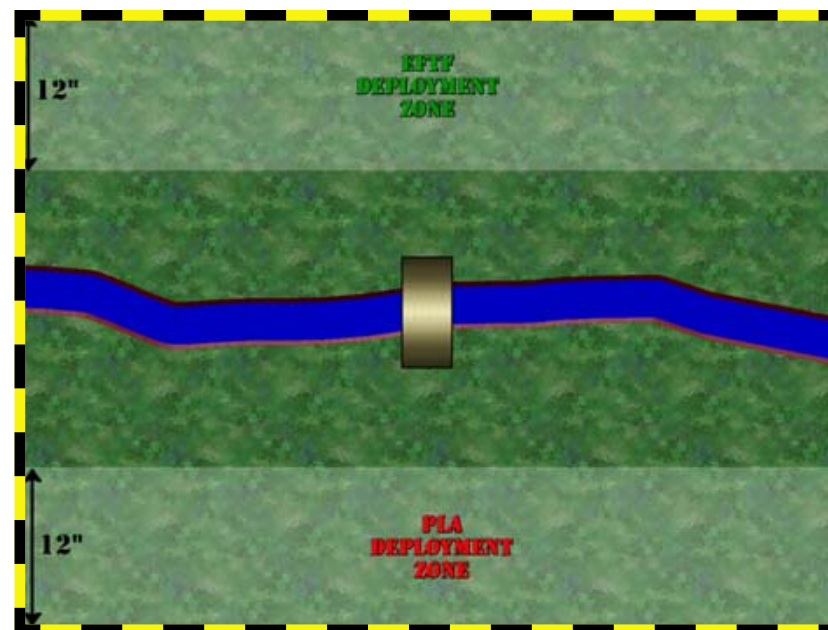
The scenario plays until the bridge is destroyed, or the EFTF force has been defeated.

POINTS MATCH

If playing with points, each side may spend up to 1000 points on any units they wish. The EFTF force must take at least one infantry unit.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Standard shattering rules do not apply to the PLA force. The EFTF force may be shattered as normal. The EFTF player can win by blowing up the bridge, or completely destroying the PLA force. The PLA player can win by shattering the EFTF force.



SCENARIO NINE – GENTLEMEN, START YOUR ENGINES

A PLA raid on a small EFTF camp catches the troops off-guard. A pair of uncrewed Warrior APCs suddenly become a prime target.

EFTF BRIEFING

PLA forces were not known to be operating in the area, so your small group were caught completely unawares. Can you make it to the Warriors before the PLA forces?

Units

Two British Army Infantry Sections (both teams)
Two British Army Warrior APCs

PLA BRIEFING

Lost behind enemy lines, your force happened across an EFTF position, catching them with their proverbial pants down. A pair of Warrior APCs sit temptingly at one side of the camp...

Units

Two PLA Infantry Squads (teams one and three only)

SETUP

The EFTF Infantry deployment zone is a 12" radius in the centre of the table. The Warriors are placed by the PLA player, exactly 12" from the closest EFTF infantry. The PLA can deploy anywhere on the table, at least 12" from the EFTF deployment zone.

SPECIAL RULES

The Warriors are inoperative until a unit spends a ready action with at least one model in contact with them. This may be performed by either side, bringing the Warriors under their control.

The Warriors are not counted towards the shattering rules.

SCENARIO LENGTH

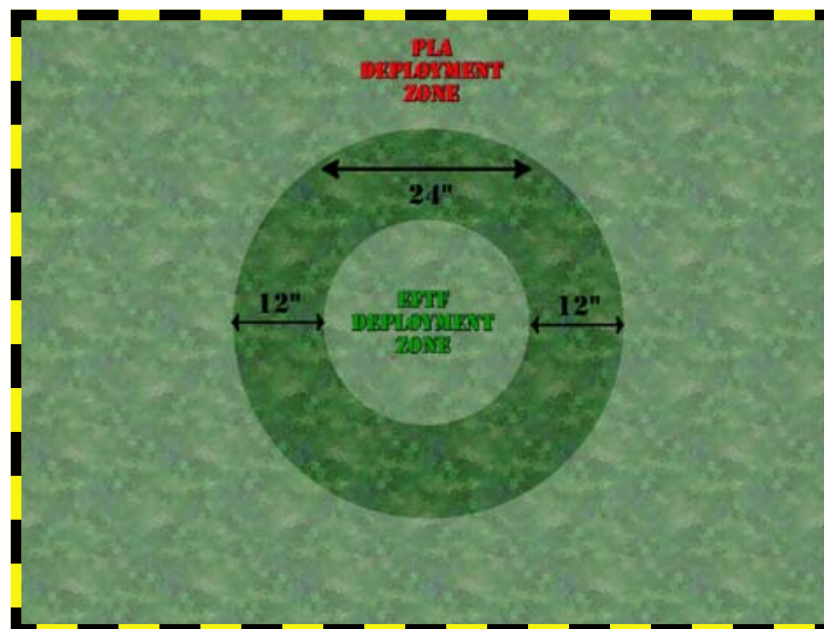
The scenario plays until one force is defeated.

POINTS MATCH

If playing with points, each side may spend up to 325 points on any infantry they wish. The EFTF player may take any two vehicles of their choice (with no points limit), replacing the Warriors in the scenario.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Standard shattering rules apply.



SCENARIO TEN – AN URGENT ESCORT

A sudden push by the EFTF has resulted in many PLA forces being trapped behind enemy lines. Amongst them, General Hsu Tseng. EFTF intelligence have located the General being escorted through the front lines back to PLA positions, and suspect he has vital knowledge of the overall PLA battle plan. A force has been dispatched to ambush his escort convoy.

EFTF BRIEFING

General Hsu Tseng undoubtedly is in possession of vital intelligence. Your objective is to take him prisoner.

Units

Two British Army Infantry Sections (both teams)
 One British Army Warrior APC
 One British Army Infantry Command Section
 One British Army Challenger II MBT

PLA BRIEFING

General Hsu must be escorted back to friendly territory, before the enemy can capture him for interrogation.

Units

Two PLA Infantry Squads (teams one and three only)
 Two PLA WZ-551 IFVs
 One PLA Type 99 MBT

SETUP

The PLA Infantry deployment zone deploy in the centre of the table, at least 16" from any table edge.

The EFTF player places scenery, and can deploy no more than 6" from any table edge.

SPECIAL RULES

Before the game, the PLA player must place a sticker or other identifier under one of the WZ-551s (placed, so that their opponent cannot see it) identifying the vehicle which contains the General. The WZ-551s may not make move actions during the first turn.

SCENARIO LENGTH

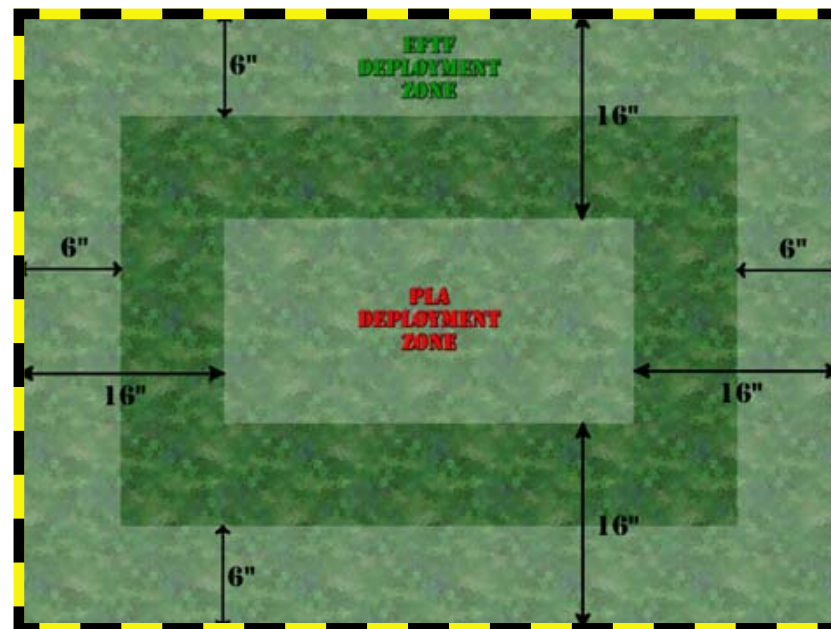
The scenario plays until the vehicle containing the PLA General has been destroyed, or has left the table.

POINTS MATCH

If playing with points, each side may spend up to 325 points on any infantry they wish. The EFTF player may take any two vehicles of their choice (with no points limit), replacing the Warriors in the scenario.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

Standard shattering rules apply to both forces. In addition, the EFTF forces can win automatically by destroying General Hsu's transport, and the PLA can win automatically by moving General Hsu's transport off any table edge.



Next Month:

The concluding part of this series of scenarios introduces more new BF Evo releases as the War reaches its climatic outcome.

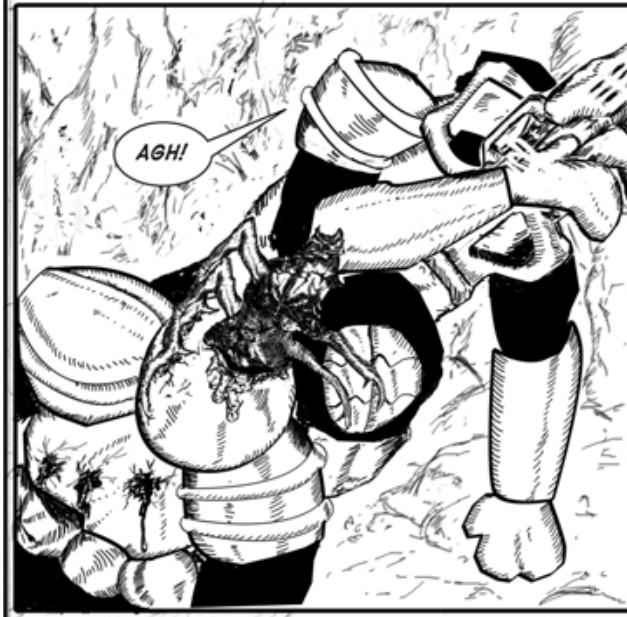
Extinction Protocol

EXTINCTION PROTOCOL: BAD DAY ON BLACK GLASS - 9 OF 11

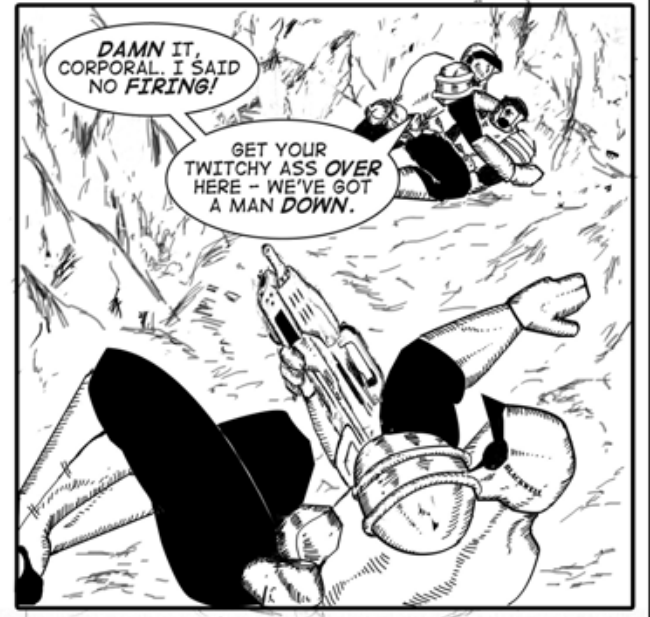




BLACKWELL -
THROW ME SOME
COVER!



AGH!



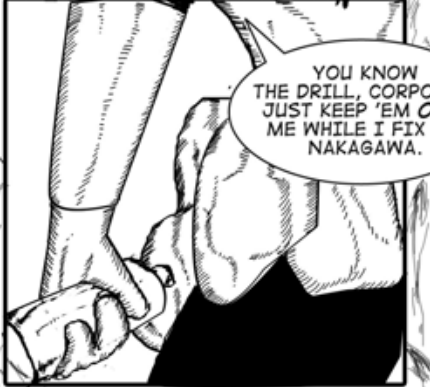
DAMN IT,
CORPORAL. I SAID
NO FIRING!

GET YOUR
TWITCHY ASS
OVER
HERE - WE'VE GOT
A MAN DOWN.



I'M SORRY, LT, I ---

SIR - NATIVES GETTING RESTLESS.



YOU KNOW THE DRILL, CORPORAL. JUST KEEP 'EM OFF ME WHILE I FIX UP NAKAGAWA.



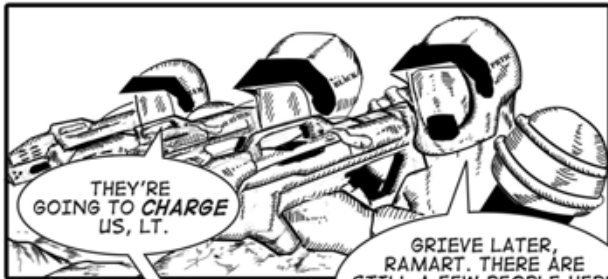
WHATEVER THE AIR IS IN HERE, HE'S SUCKED DOWN A LOT OF IT. IT'S GOING TO TAKE A MOMENT TO CYCLE THROUGH THE FILTER.



LIEUTENANT - THEY'RE CLOSING IN ON ME.



FALL BACK, RAMART. GET OVER HERE AND PICK YOURSELF OUT SOME TARGETS. PLENTY FOR EVERYONE.



THEY'RE GOING TO CHARGE US, LT.

BOWDEN- IS SHE...?

GRIEVE LATER, RAMART. THERE ARE STILL A FEW PEOPLE HERE WHO MIGHT LIVE THROUGH THIS --



-- ALTHOUGH YOU MIGHT NOT WANT TO *QUOTE* ME ON THAT.



QUICK THOUGHT, SIR --

-- BUGS'VE HURT US TODAY.



AT LEAST THIS WAY THEY'LL KNOW WE CAN HURT THEM *BACK*.



DO IT!







I DON'T
GET IT. HOW CAN
THAT BE?

FIGURE
IT OUT WHEN YOU'RE
DEAD, RAMART.

RIGHT NOW,
THINK LESS AND
FIGHT MORE!

HUFF!

WHOA,
HEADRUSH...

NICE TIMING,
NAKAGAWA.

NOW GRAB
A RIFLE AND KILL
SOMETHING!

CHRIST!

NGAH!
SON OF A
BITCH!

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Action at Ak'shi'tu



Alex Fennell and Ian Barstow Clash for Control of... a Galactic Garbage Pile

Freshly returned from his tour of duty in the US, during which time he obliterated countless foes of the mighty Dilgar Empire, Alex threw down the challenge to S&P Wargamer's finest.

Force Selection

Alex: For this 5 point Raid battle, I decided I would take nothing larger than a raid level ship. I had just finished a campaign in the US with my Dilgar fleet and the Ochlavitas and Targraths in particular had performed extremely well, and I was looking forward to taking them in this fight. One quick trip to the miniatures cabinet later told me that the UK Studio doesn't share my love of these ships, and there was only one of each to be had. Hmm. No matter, I'd try out some others.

My final fleet comprised of one Targrath, one Rohric, one Ochlavita, three Omelos, one Jashakur and two wings of Dartfighters. Two Omelos were formed into one squadron and the remaining Omelos and the Ochlavita formed another.

Given the appalling initiative penalty of the pak'ma'ra fleet and the existence of my scout it was pretty inevitable that I forced Ian to set up first. The chances are I would proceed to win the Initiative roll in every round. Our mission was a straightforward Annihilation, which meant I would win by destroying everything in Ian's fleet. We were fighting close to a planet which Ian and I quickly agreed was a 'Garbage Planet' under the control of the pak'ma'ra that the Dilgar had come to conquer (after thoroughly disinfecting it, of course).



Alex's Dilgar



Ian's pak'ma'ra

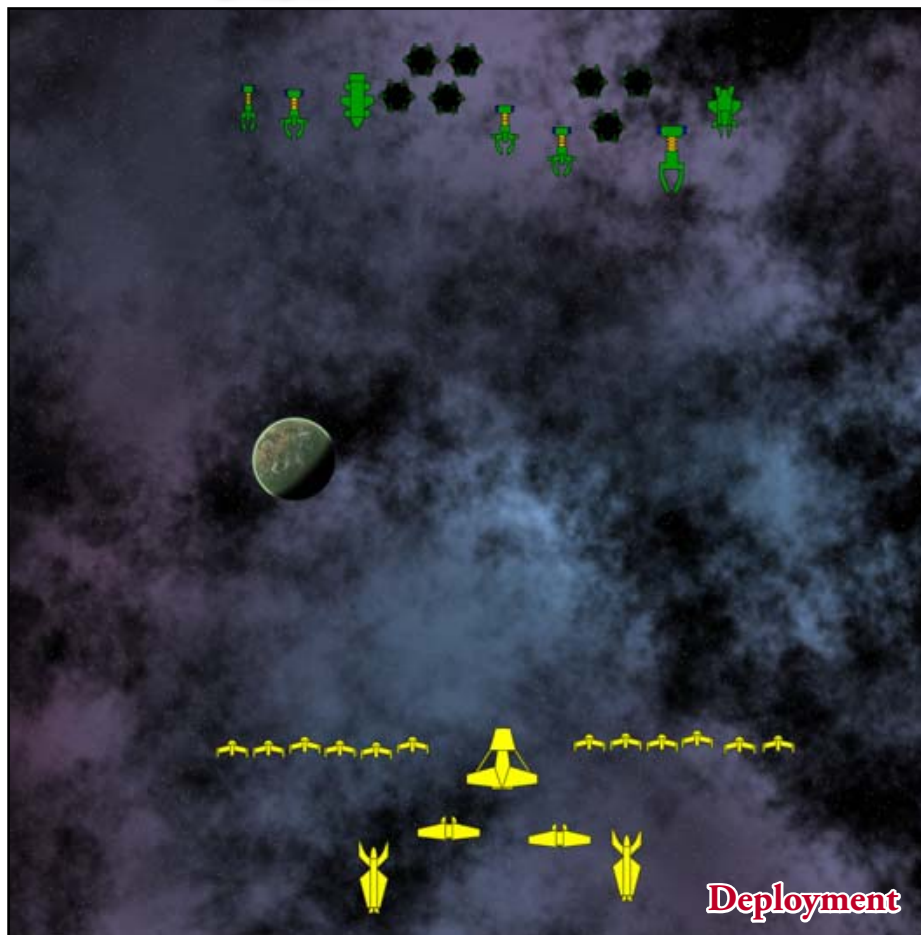
Ian: Adrian has recently finished painting the core of our pak'ma'ra Studio fleet so I was quite pleased to get the opportunity to break my losing streak with an untried force. I also like the underdog, and with their -3 initiative modifier they don't come much more underdog than that!

Looking in the pak'ma'ra cabinet I realised for a 5 point Raid I had rather a lot of options. Not as much variety as the Dilgar shelves but enough to get the balance I wanted. I'd have loved to take a big Pshul'shi convoy guardian but it's a War-level vessel and I'm not a big fan of tying up so many points on one ship. It's just too easy to walk into a lucky critical and find yourself helpless.

I wanted to make use of at least a couple of indigenous pak'ma'ra ships so I picked a pair of Urik'Hal supermerchants. These have a hull value of 6 and a serious array of mid-to-long range plasma weapons. Nothing much in the way of special rules but the great armour and weapons means they will do just nicely (I'm not hugely sophisticated as an admiral). The pak'ma'ra also make use of various League ships, so I picked a fast, powerful Brakiri-designed Halik frigate and two Ikorta armed merchants. Both these have the standard pak'ma'ra plasma weapons fitted and although only the Halik is manoeuvrable, I think they might suit my style of play.

With a single point left I turned to the Porfatis system patrol boats. I really like the look of these little chaps. Technically they rate as fighters, but they have very decent weaponry for fighters and if I can get them through the Dilgar fighter screen they might make some useful attack runs against the bigger vessels. I'm able to field a total of 12, which I hope will be enough.

So, my final fleet consists of two Urik'Hals, one Halik, two Ikortas and 12 Porfatis system boats.



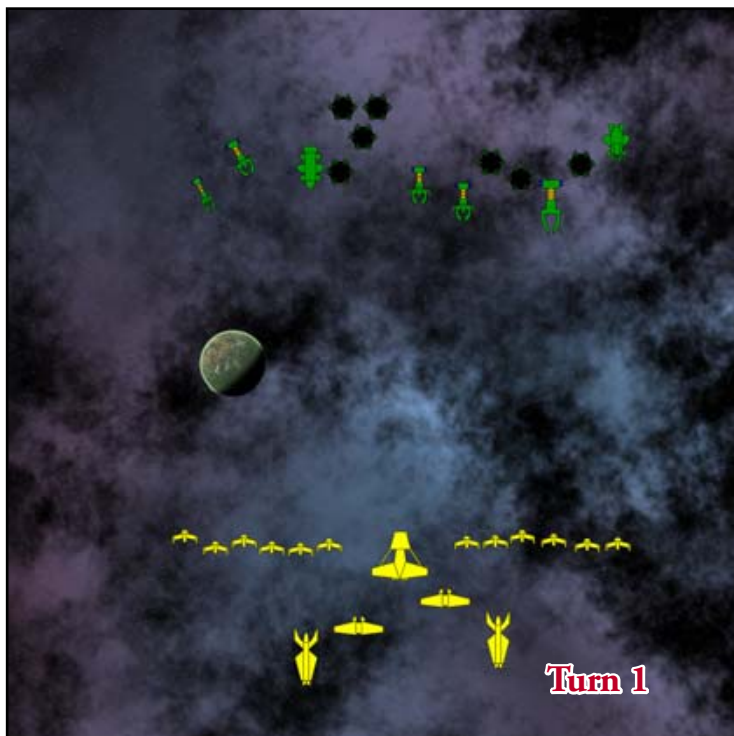
pak'ma'ra		Dilgar	
	Halik (x1)		Jashakar (x1)
	Ikorta (x2)		Ochlavita (x1)
	Porfatis (x12)		Omelos (x3)
	Urik'Hal (x2)		Rohric (x1)
			Targrath (x1)
			Thorun (two wings)

Key

Turn 1

Alex: Both fleets began to close with each other. The Dilgar weapons are generally short ranged but I did have some disruption torpedoes that I wanted to send Ian's way in the first turn. My first squadron to shoot did a good job, smacking the enemy Halik with multiple torpedoes and scoring a '6' engine critical. With the penalty suffered by the pak'ma'ra to crew quality checks Ian would need a 6 to repair that, and if I could get in close I could unload my mass drivers on the stationary ship! Ian replied in kind with torpedoes of his own and scored some hits on my Targrath and my Omelos squadron. My only other ship in range was the Targrath which inflicted a few more hits onto the Halik.

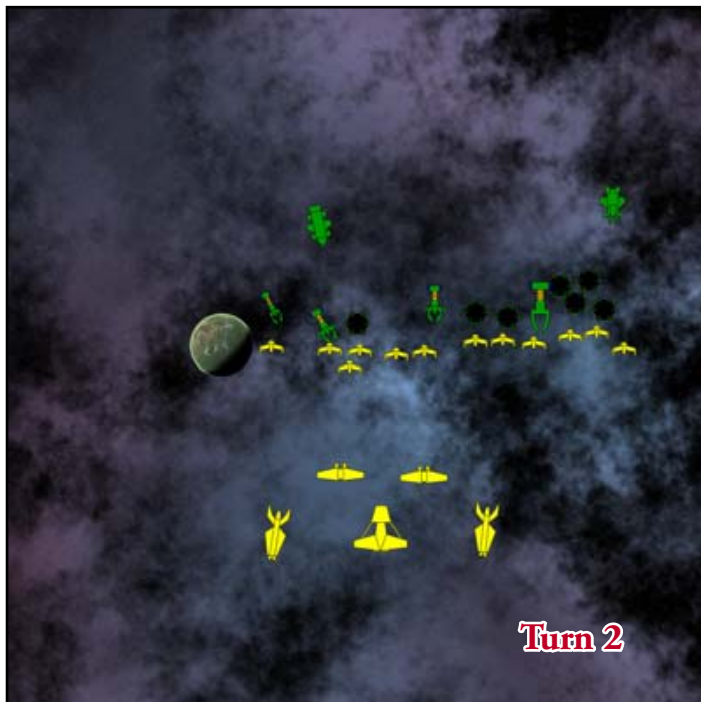
Ian: having sailed pretty much straight forward (hey, what's the point of deployment if you immediately change your mind?) I knew that the Halik at the point of my formation was the likely target of choice for Alex, and with my terrible initiative this probably wouldn't be the final time I fired second. That said, I wasn't expecting to lose all engine power! So much for my most manoeuvrable ship.



My return fire was not as devastating as I had hoped, with limited damage being handed out to Omelos #1 and Omelos #2 along with the Targrath. Urik'Hal #1 summed things up by rolling snake eyes for its plasma torpedoes, barely scratching the paintwork. On to Turn 2 then...

Turn 2

Alex: With both our fleets closing there was a flurry of special actions to concentrate firepower on various enemy ships, and my fighters swarmed out to engage the enemy fighter craft in dogfights across the front line. These went as well expected, destroying four of Ian's for only one loss of mine. Ian's unengaged fighters then fired into my capital ships and did exceptionally well – those fighters are tough! I would need to kill as many as possible in dogfights next turn while their torpedoes re-loaded. My Targrath unloaded onto the forward Ikorta and overloaded it's shields with the number of hits, knocking out all forward guns and doing a lot of damage. One of Ian's two Urik'Hals was targeted and was badly hurt. Ian's return fire with his capital ships destroyed one of the two Omelos in the squadron and scratched the paintwork of a number of others. Rather annoyingly Ian managed to fix the engine critical on the Halik!



Turn 2

My Torpedoes had reloaded and I was now in a position to get the Rohric into weapon range. Things were looking pretty good.

Ian: having fired of all my slow-loading plasma torpedoes in Turn 1, this was likely to be a less effective barrage, which didn't bode well after my first wave of shooting. Having lost the initiative (surprise, surprise) everything but the powerless Halik continued forwards, with the Porfatis boats surging as close to the Dilgar as possible. I was pleased when only 6 of them were engaged by the enemy fighters, giving the other 6 a good chance of damaging their targets.

With a -1 dogfight modifier we didn't cover ourselves in glory, going down 4-1, but all the Porfatis attacking the larger Dilgar scored hits, with the one on the left flank causing a reactor critical on the Ochlavita! This was very pleasing and I think Alex quickly realised he would need to deal with them very sharply.

I concentrated most of my remaining fire on Omelos #2, first crippling and then destroying it. It meant not much damage was caused elsewhere but I



The Fighters Close

decided that in this battle I'd take a page out of Nick the Greek's book of naval tactics – you'll be well aware of the beatings I have taken over the past few months at Nick's hands in Victory at Sea games – and concentrate on destruction rather than damage.

At the end of the turn I got quite a bonus repairing the Halik's engines, especially with the -1 modifier for my softy crew!

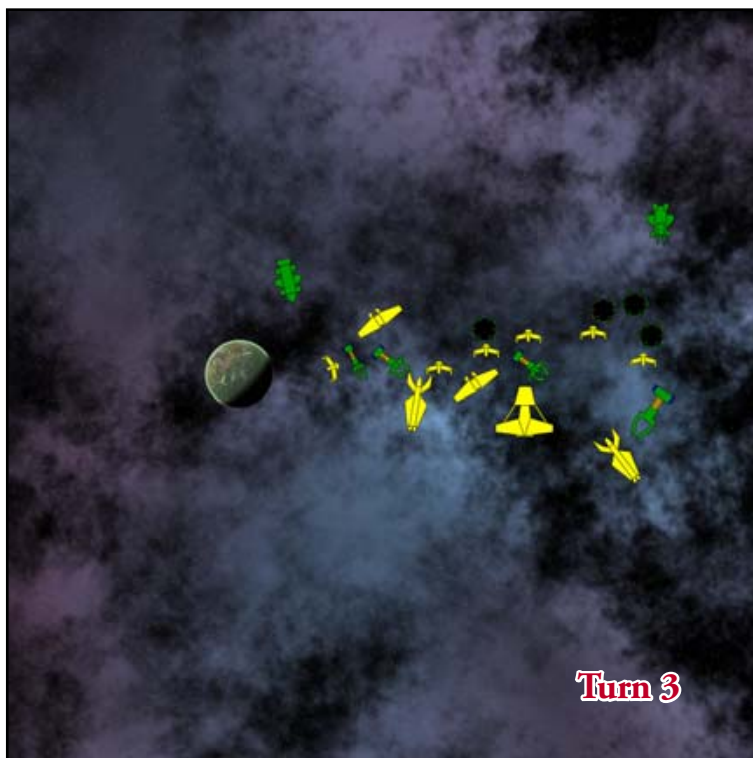
Turn 3

Alex: Both our movement phases were pretty straightforward as each fleet swarmed to point blank range. My fighters engaged as many of the Porfatis as possible but there were just a few I could not reach, which left Ian with only 3 at the end of the fighter combats. Both sides opened up on each other with as much firepower as we could. The great news for me was that I managed to destroy Ikorta #2, one of the Urik'Hals and the ensuing explosion from this missed one of my Omelos's and instead badly hurt Ian's other Ikorta. Unfortunately Ian had an absolutely spectacular round of shooting. After the last vestiges of plasma weaponry had dwindled away one of my Omelos was destroyed and the second was reduced to both crippled and a skeleton crew, the Ochlavita lost all it's crew leaving it a drifting hulk and the Jashakur was destroyed in a single salvo from Ian as an afterthought. Oh, and did I mention the double six he rolled as a critical against my mostly untouched Targrath, instantly crippling it!

Ian: We really weren't messing about in this game. Both Alex and I took the scenario title of Annihilation very literally, thrusting forwards as fast as we were able. I'm pretty certain Alex is intending to envelope me on both flanks, but with my strong flank weapons I'm not too worried about flying into the middle of Alex's formation and bringing the plasma weapons to bear.

With the usual initiative failure and Alex's clever use of his squadrons, I once more had to second-guess most of Alex's intentions. This pretty much confirms to me that my plan to play things simple is the best one. I'd thoroughly recommend pak'ma'ra players adopt the KISS principle of tactics (that being Keep It Simple, Stupid for the three of you not familiar with the term) as you are less likely to lead yourself into trouble trying to out-manoeuvre your opponent.

Alex had correctly identified the surviving Porfatis boats as priority targets, and only two were left free for attack runs on the bigger Dilgar ships. Despite losing the dogfights 3-1, I was delighted when one of the other Porfatis successfully inflicted a thrusters critical on Omelos #1! This was just the



beginning a rather good round of firing. All our plasma torpedoes were online and this time they really did the business. The recovering Halik capitalised on the Porfatis's critical on Omelos #1 by totally destroying it in a wave of fire.

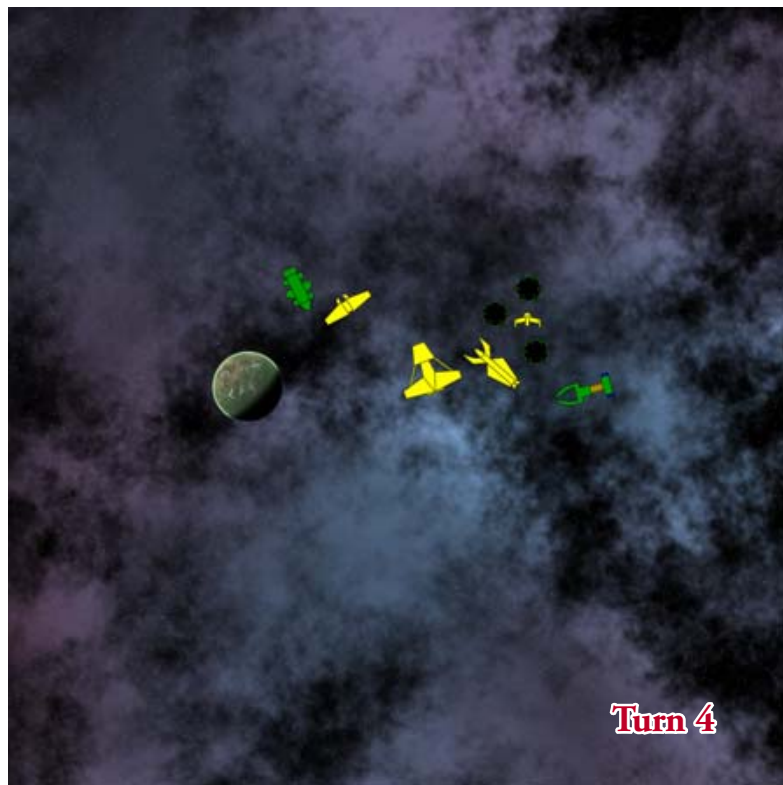
I then lost Ikorta #2 but much to Alex's annoyance it failed to blow up when an explosion would have had nasty consequences to my bunched formation. Urik'Hal #1 then became the centre of attention, destroying the Jashakur and crippling Omelos #3 with a hull breach critical, before being destroyed itself, doing superficial damage to Ikorta #1.

With only two of my ships left to fire, Ikorta #1 inflicted light damage on the Rohric and destroyed Omelos #3, while Urik'Hal #2 reduced the Ochlavita to a skeleton crew and then had the shot of the battle, causing a catastrophic explosion critical on the relatively undamaged Targrath, which had been threatening to turn the course of the battle. No question that this was the key moment of the battle, as I saw it – providing of course I could successfully go for the kill and not blow it again.

Turn 4

Alex: Rats. This now looks quite bad. Ian is actually talking out loud about the possibility of winning the game and unless I can do something quite special he might have a point. My fighters mob the last of Ian's fighters (who have done extremely well against my ships), the Targrath limps around to deliver what I hope is a knockout punch and the Rohric lumbers forward trusting to its high hull score to come out of this mess fighting. Knowing that this would be the last chance I got I unloaded the Targrath's forward guns onto the Halik. Ian's deployment meant that if I could get it to blow up there was a real chance it would savage the Ikorta next to it, which would do my chances no harm at all. I managed to get the Halik to -8 hull, meaning it would explode on a 2+. Guess what I rolled...

The Rohric is pummelled in return by the Ikorta (so much for hull 6), suffering a critical hit which reduces its speed to 1". The Rohric really fails



to cover itself in glory by doing nothing substantial and as expected the Targrath is put out of it's misery by Ian.

Ian: OK, the Halik got destroyed and there was a horrible wait while Alex rolled for the inevitable explosion that might cause a chain reaction destroying most of my fleet. I needed to see him roll a '1', and luckily for me, he did. It's been a while since the dice really ran in my favour, but things seemed to be going my way right now.

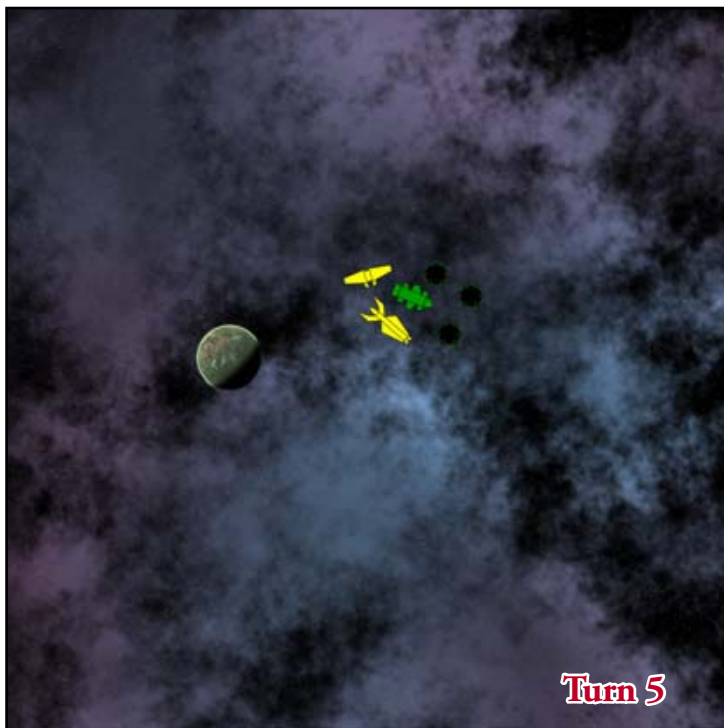
The good fortune continued when I shot up the well-armoured Rohric. Alex had been putting a lot of stock in its heavy protection but a pair of critical hits by Ikorta #1 made the Rohric look a lot less intimidating, as well as slowing it down to just 1" per turn!

Urik'Hal #2 continued its match-winning performance by polishing off the Targrath, leaving just the Rohric and three flights of Dilgar fighters. It was definitely my game to lose now.

Turn 5

Alex: I've got three fighters left and a damaged Rohric. Hmm. There's nothing for it but to limp forwards and hope for high dice rolls! Ian moves his ship out of my forward arc leaving just my rear guns to fire. My fighters engage the Urik'Hal but despite re-rolls to hit do nothing. Rather unsurprisingly they last all of about 5 seconds to Ian's anti-fighter guns. Hoping for a lucky critical I actually hit the Urik'Hal with the rear guns of the Rohric but not much happens. I take fire from Ian's last two ships and the Rohric slides closer to its threshold levels. To rub it in my crew can't fix the damaged engine.

Ian: The big decision this turn was whether or not to put all speed to the engines of Urik'Hal #2 and steam right past the still-dangerous Rohric, meaning only its rear guns would be a threat to us. I could be greedy for firepower and go toe-to-toe, but I decided I could be patient here, so I took the sneaky option and whizzed past.

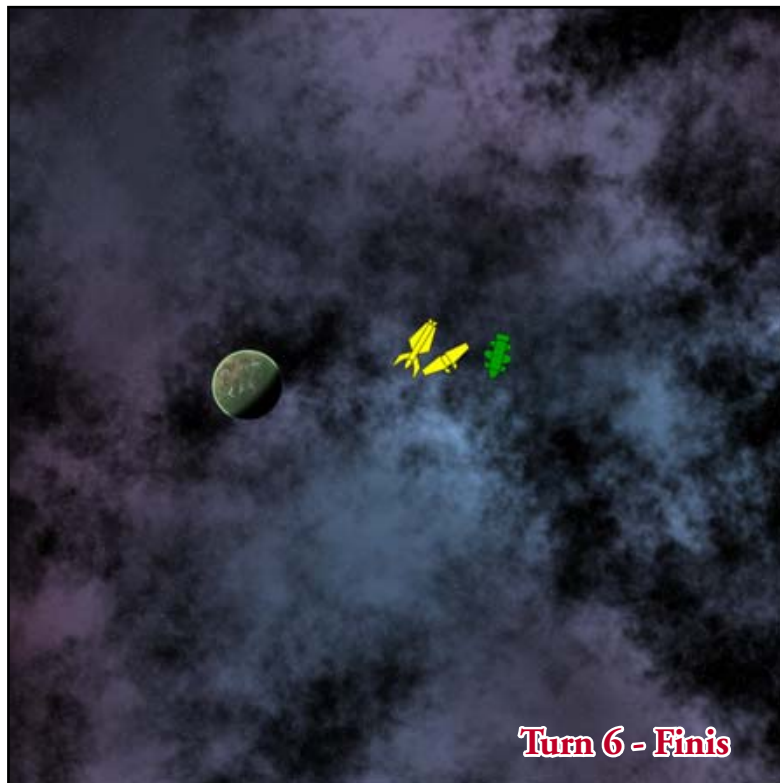


I didn't completely finish the Rohric but took it close to being crippled as well as destroying all three flights of the annoying but ineffective Dilgar fighters.

Finis

Alex: At least I won the initiative, which meant that if I somehow could roll fantastic numbers on the dice I might take out Ian's Urik' Hal. Alas it is not to be, and indeed I missed with all shooting! In return Ian starts with the Ikorta, crippling the Rohric and then moves to the Urik'Hal, destroying the last of the Dilgar ships.

Ian: By now I had known Alex had needed a miracle, but his shooting had really gone to pieces, and not so much as a single hit was inflicted. The



combined firepower concentrated on the Rohric proved to much, and once more the powerful pak'ma'ra plasma weaponry finished the job.

Conclusion

Alex: Ack! That didn't go particularly well. Ian can keep the stupid planet; I didn't want it anyway. I was pretty confident about this game right up until my Targrath was crippled with a lucky critical hit. It had come about onto the far right of Ian's fleet and I was all set to turn left and cause misery to as many ships as its heavy bolters could reach. The great thing about A Call to Arms is the ability to do these massive critical hits, and Ian got one just when he needed it! As for the penalty to crew quality that Ian suffered to his repair rolls, that really didn't hurt him at all as two sixes saw both repaired on the Halik and the Ikorta. Still, Ian could do with a win after all the beating he's been getting at the hands of Nick in Victory at Sea, and I was happy to oblige.

Ian: At last, a victory! It's been a while, although I did rather well in the Studio Battlefield Evolution campaign. It's nice to climb above Fordy in the S&P battle reports league table. One has a reputation to maintain, after all! It was certainly a tight game, but the fact I was always in it was quite an improvement for me, and that gave me the confidence to finish the job. I'm not saying I wasn't a little fortunate though. Alex failed twice to cause potentially calamitous ship explosions and for once my criticals were plentiful and effective.



Obviously when you play with a brand new fleet for the first time you don't for certain know how it's going to go. I have to say I rather like the pak'ma'ra. They have some serious disadvantages: poor initiative and the Gentle Being rule which inhibits crew repairs being the stand-outs, but in return you get Redundant Systems, allowing a 'saving' roll for every point of Crew or damage loss, with a '6' meaning the point is ignored (hitting some disgusting bit of pak'ma'ra dung or whatever of no importance). There are also some nice bonuses for campaign games which shouldn't be overlooked either.

The plasma weaponry means that you get good firepower at all engagement ranges, allowing a tactic of concentrating all fire in the first turn of a battle particularly attractive. The Porfatis system patrol boats will become a real player favourite, I think. Sure, they don't dogfight very well, but you can flood the game with them and cause serious damage to capital ships. All-in-all, they may smell bad, but they play good!

Scenic Mayhem

Create your own Colony Settlement with the help of Ben “Bob the Builder” Rubery



Terrain can be a pain. This is an unfortunate fact of life for wargamers, and because you cannot generally buy cheap terrain that looks good you have to either spend ridiculous amounts of money for vac formed or resin terrain or make it for yourself.

Making it for yourself is the road many people end up taking. It need not cost a lot or consume a great deal of your time either. I remember (cue a sort of misty eyed flashback) years ago in another gaming magazine when a terrain article would include a two page spread of the templates you needed to make the model. It could be done with foam board, plasticard or just very thick and reinforced card, and you didn't have to hunt down compressed foam or any other less easily available materials. This was about ten or fifteen years ago, so to be fair a lot of people do not remember those heady days.

In this article I will walk you through constructing hab units and storage sheds for Starship Troopers, which give you a frontier settlement for your MI to defend, your Skinnies to raid, your Arachnids to swarm over, or your Forth to stomp on. I will tell you where I got my materials from, and list places they can be found (as nothing annoys me more than a vague “get it from a craft/discount store” in modelling articles).

A template for the hab unit and storage shed is provided at the end of this article.

With the materials assembled clear a space to begin this little project. I simply lay the cutting mat out on my rug, so if you are wondering what the horrible grey thing around the cutting mat is, now you know.

I took the template that I had printed out and lay it on the foamboard, securing with dressmaking pins the outline of the section I wanted. In the illustrations I am making a hab unit, and in Figure 1 you can see me using pins to mark out the corners, which I then join up using the pen and ruler. I then marked out two of each wall section, and on one of the smaller walls copied the front of house window and doors.

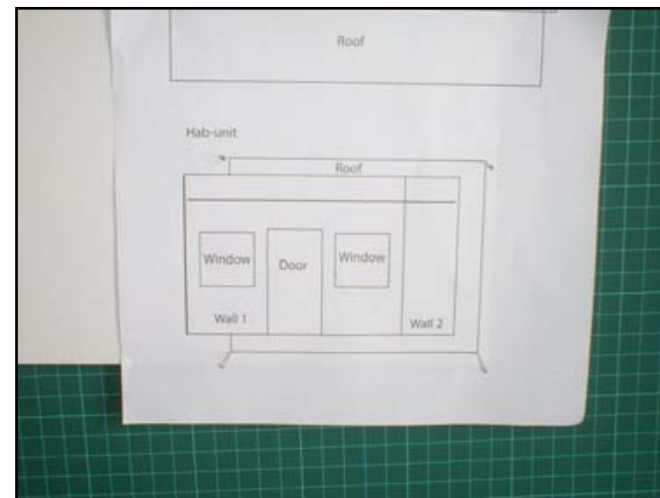


Figure 1

You will need:

5mm foamboard - I purchased 5 A3 sheets from Staples for £8.99, this is enough to make about five hab units and three storage sheds, but I am only making a couple and saving the rest of the foamboard for other projects. You can also find foamboard in art shops (generally next to the mounting board, just ask at the counter).

PVA glue – you can find this in supermarkets, craft shops, the Works, Staples. This is not a hard to find item.

Dress making pins – I got the ones I use from Wilkinsons, about 70p for a box of at least a hundred.

A craft knife – I got a shiny new one as part of a cutting mat set I got from the Works for £7.99, which came with a non-slip steel rule and A3 cutting mat as well. You don't need this, all you need is a sharp knife, as you can simply use a very thick layer of newspaper to protect your work surface. I got a cutting mat as I plan on doing a lot of cutting. You can get craft knives from Woolworths, DIY stores, craft stores and some supermarkets.

Premixed filler in a tube – cost me about £2.50 from Wilkinsons for all the filler I could ever think to use. Premixed filler is a lot easier to use than the thicker slightly powdery stuff that you get in tubs, you do not have to mix it with water and mess around trying to get the right consistency. You can also buy it from hardware stores, B&Q, Do it All etc. It is a fairly standard DIY item. It is great for terrain, basing and filling cracks in your walls.

A cheap goat hair brush – cost me 50p from my LGS. This was for applying glue and filler, you could just as easily use any other tool, such as a little glue spatula used by school children.

A few drops of any paint colour (except white) – Another incredibly easy thing to get hold of, unless you are one of those who do not paint your miniatures. You can use poster paint or the acrylic paint used in by children if you are really desperate. But you only require about three drops.

A pen or pencil and a ruler – finding these should not be hard. I use pen so you can see it in the illustrations. I used a steel rule, as they are nice and I got one in the cutting mat set.

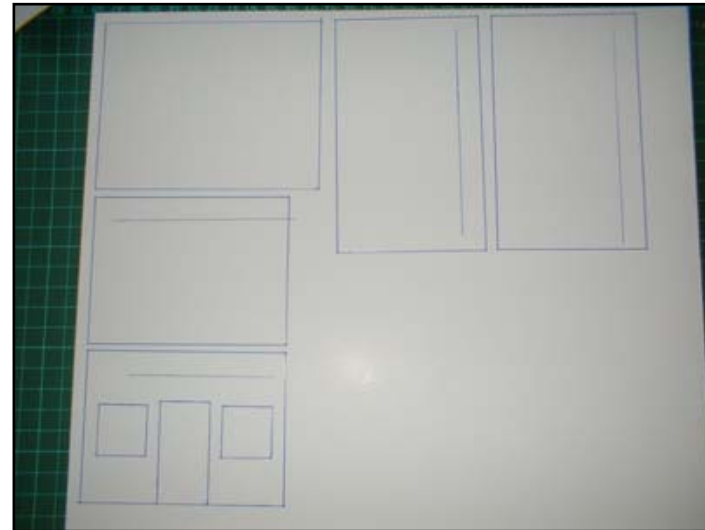


Figure 2

All wall sections were then marked out using pen and ruler, as seen in figure 2.

I then took the craft knife and the ruler and cut out the shapes I had drawn. There are several important pieces of advice I should give here:

- 1) Use a sharp knife. It cuts better and is less liable to snag or jog and cause you to no longer be able to play the piano.
- 2) Do not cut directly towards yourself. That's another surefire way to stab yourself somewhere uncomfortable.
- 3) It is better to make the shape slightly too big and trim in than make it slightly too small. You can always trim something down, but you cannot trim something up.
- 4) When cutting foam board you do not have to penetrate all the way on the first cut. There is nothing wrong with making a series of light cuts, and indeed a guide cut is an excellent idea. Pressing too hard will damage the surface underneath the foam board unless there is a cutting mat of very thick layer of newspaper between the two.

You can see the results of this in figure 3. To make life easier I wrote on each wall section what it was. Note also that the level of the roof is marked on the templates. This is not a line a cut is made along, it is just a guide for where the roof should rest.



Figure 3

I then used dressmaking pins to assemble the foamboard sections. This was simply to make sure all the pieces fitted together and get them ready to be glued. This can be seen in figure 4.

Once I knew for certain the pieces fit together (having identified two sections where a little excess needed to be trimmed) I got the PVA glue out and by partially disassembling the hab unit model, I applied it to the surfaces that came into contact with each other. This was actually just a matter of pulling the pins out slightly, applying glue, and pushing them back together again.

For the roof I took some of the off cuts of foam board and used them as supports to help make sure that it would take a reasonable amount of weight. This is shown in figure 5. The roof will now be able to support an exosuit or two, but if you plan on putting heavier models on it you would have to have floor to ceiling supports inside the building. A simple solution to that is to say that anything heavier than exosuits would not be supported by the roof and would fall through the ceiling.

The final step before painting the model was to seal all the exposed foam parts. I made a mixture of the pre-mixed filler and PVA glue in a 2:1 ratio, and added a few drops of red paint so that I could see what areas I had already covered. I then applied it to all the exposed foam areas as seen in figure 6. I also used it to close a small gap in the back corner of the roof.



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6

If you wish to have a stucco effect on the building, you can use this mixture on all of the walls, giving each a thick coat of it and then dragging pins downwards to tease out irregularities and create the desired roughness.

I removed the pins at this stage, though if you wish to cut the heads off and push them in, they can contribute to the structural integrity of the building.

Painting the building

I sprayed the building using normal black undercoat. With the exposed foam sealed there was no risk of it being eaten away by the spray paint. After touching up areas missed by the spray I had a completely black building, as seen in figure 7.

I used only two paints to get the desired effect, a dark grey and a stone grey. I used paints from the Vallejo Game Colour range, number 48 sombre grey for the base coat (see figure 8) followed by a 50:50 mix with number 49 stonewall grey and then a light drybrushing with stonewall grey (figure 9).

The finished product looks ok, and as most wargaming models and terrain is seen at a distance of about four feet away it should look fine on a gaming table. If you wanted to detail the house you can, one example of how would be to take the door piece you have cut out, seal it as described above and paint it an appropriate colour and then use some masking tape to make hinges, attach the door to the building. To make more realistic windows take a blister and cut two squares from it that are slightly larger than the windows on the building, and when the building has been fully painted, glue them to the inside.

For the scenario that I have written you only require two hab units and two storage sheds, saving the rest of the foam board for future projects, but if you wanted to you could build a small town from the templates given.

Anyway, hopefully this article has provided food for thought, and the actual construction of the building only took about half an hour, followed by going and doing something else, then undercoating, going and doing something else, then painting for about 15 minutes and the building was finished. So it is a quick and fairly cheap way to get some terrain on the table. Good gaming!

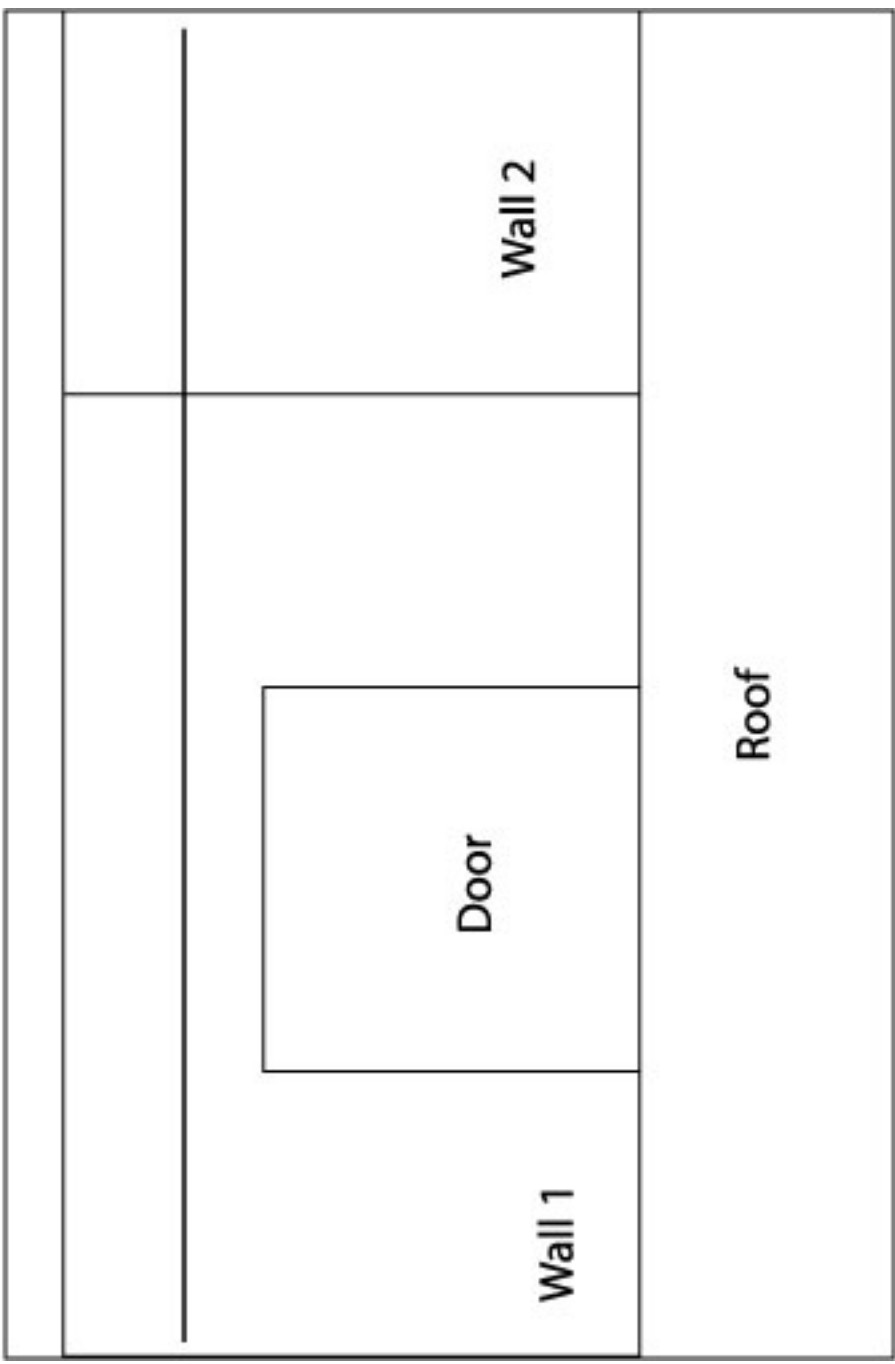


Figure 7

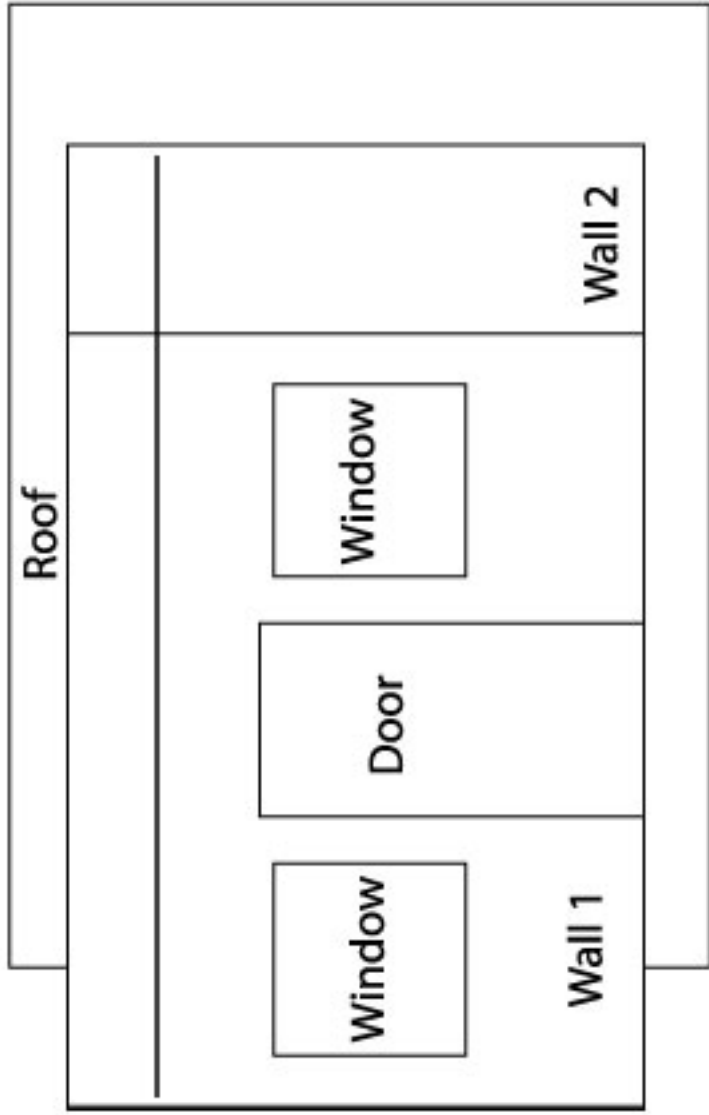


Figure 8

Storage Shed



Hab-unit



Reinforcements



Three More Ships for A Call to Arms

Matthew Sprange

Well, you have already seen the Techno Mage Pinnacle in this issue – and, at the eleventh hour, we were able to squeeze not one, not two, but *three* more ships in!

Over the next few months, in the run up to the Second Edition release of A Call to Arms, you will be seeing a lot more new ships, as we plug some of the gaps in the existing fleets, release some brand new fleets (you have already seen the pak'ma'ra, stand by for the Gaim and Psi Corps!), and some 'odd' ships that do not really fit into any fleet structure.

This latest crop is ready for you to start using now! So, without further ado, allow us to present the Nolo'Tar frigate for the ISA, the Shakara for the Brakiri, and a brand new Troligan for the Minbari.



ISA Nolo'Tar Ranger Frigate**Skirmish****Speed:** 8**Turn:** 2/45°**Hull:** 5**Damage:** 26/5**Crew:** 22/4**Troops:** -**Craft:** 1 Flyer Flight**Special Rules:**

Atmospheric, Flight

Computer, Jump Engine

In Service: 1226+

Weapon	Range	Arc	AD	Special
Fusion Cannon	12	F	4	AP, Mini-Beam, Twin-Linked
Fusion Cannon	12	T	6	AP, Mini-Beam, Twin-Linked

Lightly armed for a Ranger vessel, the Nolo'Tar is a throwback to the generation that survived Valen. Especially useful in training missions and evacuations, this transportation frigate became a common sight during Valen's great Shadow War but fell out of use during the following thousand years. It was resurrected quickly when the Rangers began to deploy in larger numbers again during the next Shadow War, mostly to ferry refugees from planet to planet when the war drew too near.

Nolo'Tar Ranger Frigate

Brakiri Shakara-class Scout Cruiser**Skirmish****Speed:** 8**Turn:** 1/45°**Hull:** 5**Damage:** 16/6**Crew:** 18/6**Troops:** 1**Craft:** None**Special Rules:**

Jump Engine, Scout,

Stealth 4+

In Service: 2261+

Weapon	Range	Arc	AD	Special
Comms Disruptor*	15	F	2	Super AP
Graviton Pulsar	12	F	6	AP
Graviton Pulsar	12	A	4	AP

* see p117 of Sky Full of Stars for the full rules on Comms Disruptors.

Using salvaged technology lifted from one of the numerous battlefields along the Abbai trade routes during the Shadow War, the Im-Rehsa power corporation managed to reverse engineer a few large and bulky versions of the Matriarchate's communications disruptors. Using these new systems on a hull specifically designed to house them, the Shakara is a lightly armed and armoured scouting vessel that maps out hyperspace routes and passes under enemy sensors.

Shakara Scout Cruiser

Minbari Troligan-class Armoured Cruiser**Battle****Speed:** 7**Turn:** 1/45°**Hull:** 6**Damage:** 60/15**Crew:** 58/16**Troops:** 4**Craft:** 1 Flyer Flight**Special Rules:**

Advanced Jump Point,

Flight Computer, Stealth 4+

In Service: 2166+

Weapon	Range	Arc	AD	Special
Neutron Laser	30	F	4	Beam, Double Damage, Precise, Super AP
Fusion Cannon	18	F	8	AP, Mini-Beam
Fusion Cannon	18	A	6	AP, Mini-Beam
Fusion Cannon	18	P	6	AP, Mini-Beam
Fusion Cannon	18	S	6	AP, Mini-Beam

Extremely rare and possessing relatively weak armament for a frontline Minbari warship, the Troligan can nevertheless withstand a huge amount of punishment. In theory, the cruiser was designed to close range with an enemy fleet and, supported by warcruisers and fighters, wreak havoc and throw opponents into confusion as other Minbari ships break them apart. With limited stealth capabilities, Troligan captains often have to rely more on their thick armour, something that goes against a lot of Minbari philosophy except within certain circles of the Warrior Caste.

Troligan Armoured Cruiser



Rallying for Another Call to Arms

A Sneak Peek at the future of A Call to Arms

Matthew Sprange

Regular visitors to our forums will know that we have been beavering away on the second edition of A Call to Arms ever since Armageddon was released. This is always the way of things – as soon as one book is done for a game, the next quickly begins (remember that work on Armageddon was finished some months before it was actually released, meaning we have to work far ahead). Due for an August release this year, the second edition of A Call to Arms will be meaner, leaner, and packed full of all the goodness you have come to expect from space combat in the universe of Babylon 5.

So, what changes have we made, you'll be wanting to know?

Well, though the main development work on A Call to Arms was completed last year, we are currently going through a rigorous period of playtesting, nailing down each rule and each fleet to provide



the perfect game balance. The caveat is that this playtesting is not complete yet, and so what I discuss here is as the rules currently stand – everything may change if we detect an obvious loophole or

subsequently decide that something new just does not work! However, this will at least give you a taste of what is to come, and the areas we have focused on.

Two Books, One Game

This time around, there will be no boxed set. There are several reasons for this, such as cost of manufacture (box sets are very expensive to produce), poor durability of storage (distributors and some retailers simply do not like boxes) and an almost complete bar to the book trade market (you'll never see A Call to Arms in a standard book shop at the moment). However, chief among our concerns was the desire for a new format. . .

We made the decision in 2006 to only produce one hardback supplement for A Call to Arms every year. So, no more small fleet books, players could pick up the latest rules and new ships from Signs & Portents (which should be a regular read for every CTA player!), and we need only ask them to buy one relatively cheap hardback book in a year to keep 'current' with all official rulings, rather than carry around a stack of 32 page softbacks.

In keeping this theme, we decided to release the second edition of A Call to Arms as two hardback books. One would serve as the main rulebook, the other would contain the fleet lists. This would do two things. First, it would keep costs down (a second edition box set, with all the information we would have to squeeze in, could easily have ended up costing over \$70!). Second, it would allow us in the future to produce an updated fleet book *without having to change the entire game!* Makes things easier for us, cheaper for you and, I think, a better game all round. We can still continue with the single hardback supplement every year and then, a little way down the line, release an updated fleet book with all the new ships and races that have appeared since then. It keeps things very neat.

The Rulebook

This will be a 96 page hardback, covering all the rules you need to play A Call to Arms. We have many more scenarios in there than before, and the campaign rules that so many people enjoy are still present. Boarding actions, space stations, and planetary assaults have all been integrated into the rules, and Hyperspace and Fighters now get their own chapters, allowing us to flesh them out a little more and make the rules a lot clearer.

Of course, what you are wanting to know is, what changes are being made to the rules themselves? Can we expect a completely different game?

On the whole, no, it is still very much the CTA you know and love. What we have worked on chiefly are clarification and examples, making the rules as bullet proof as possible. To do this, we brought new faces into the main playtest group, and compiled every single question ever asked about A Call to Arms, making sure the rules themselves could answer these queries.

There are, however, some changes that have been made. Here are just a few, to give you a flavour.



Breaching Pod

Beams

This is one of the larger changes – we wanted to maintain the dominance of beams in the game (there is nothing quite like slicing your enemy's flagship in half!) but we also noted that the current rules leaned heavily in favour of Hull 6 ships, as most beam weapons were AP or Super AP.

So, instead of re-rolling every hit with one number higher than before as we do now, beam weapons will always hit on a 4+, regardless of Hull, and *keep* hitting on a 4+. This makes the rule much easier for new players to understand, gives beams a nice 'feel' in that they can rip through any ship with ease, regardless of armour, and means that Hull 4 ships are no longer death traps! This meant a rebalancing of the AD that beam-equipped ships had, of course, but the change has made the game very smooth.

Mini-Beams, incidentally, also hit on a 4+, giving a great deal of atmosphere to the Minbari, as they now very rarely care how much armour you bring with you. . .

Traits

Speaking of beams, we also tweaked and clarified a lot of the existing traits, for both ships and weapons. The ever contentious Stealth has been reviewed in depth, and we have added another modifier (on top of the 'range bands' that added a new tactical dimension to Minbari and their opponents). Now, you will get an additional +1 bonus to break the Stealth of a ship *if* one of your other ships has already broken it. Combine that with close range and a Scout, and you should find you have far more options when fighting the Minbari now (the Minbari, of course, will need to learn how to deny you those bonuses).

New traits have also been added. There are a few One-Shot weapons in the game now and, yes, Quad Damage is a possibility for a select few ships. The Unique trait has allowed us to put the Excalibur and Liandra into the fleet lists, while Agile and Lumbering affect how a ship can turn, allowing us to mimic the TV show with greater fidelity.

The biggest addition is probably Anti-Fighter, and this ties into the Fighter chapter. Most (not all!) ships now have an Anti-Fighter trait, which basically represents all the particle beams and other such weapons the ships have in the current edition of the rules. However, they are no longer weapons per se, but dice that are rolled in reaction

to a fighter moving close to a ship at the end of the Movement Phase. If the flight survives this hail of fire, then it will be free to attack in the Attack Phase as normal. Of course, things are never *that* easy. The Advanced Anti-Fighter trait will make some ships deadly to flights, while more fighters now have missiles or torpedoes that can be launched far outside Anti-Fighter range. Fighters that support a ship can now act as Interceptors, while ships with the Escort trait can now lend their Anti-Fighter dice to nearby allies.

As you can see, the use of Fighters has suddenly become a lot more tactical, and they can still pack a wallop when they get in close.

Attack Phase

Not so many changes here as you might think – in fact, most of it boils down to a few tweaks and clarifications. There is a revised Critical Hit table, which now allows the loss of traits and troops before the thresholds are reached. And there is an addition to the Damage Table, whereby a badly damaged ship will explode after a turn's delay, allowing fighters and other ships to move away. Of course, if you pile on the attacks, it is still possible to detonate it immediately!

And the Rest. . .

The various characters we added in Sky Full of Stars proved to be popular, so we have an all new Admirals chapter, which now allows you to create your own fleet leaders by choosing from a list of Admiral traits. Your character may, for example, be an Engineering Genius, allowing him to keep the ship moving no matter what damage it takes, or he may be skilled in Linked Targeting, allowing his ship to fire missiles at a target out of line of sight, using sensor data from another vessel. Or he may have both traits!

Hyperspace also receives its own chapter, allowing us to lock some of the more esoteric rulings down, and provide clear descriptions of how this works. The biggest change is in the use of the renowned 'jump point bomb'. It is still possible to launch this kind of attack, but you will need a Scout on the table first, and it takes a very well-trained crew to get the shock waves on target. . .



The power of the Earth Alliance!

The Fleet Book

This, of course, is what you all really want to know about. Have we nerfed your fleet? Have we made your enemies born again hard?

Umm, no. We had two key aims with the revision of the fleet lists. First, we wanted absolute balance across all the fleet lists in terms of both campaigns *and* tournaments. This did not mean that, for example, every Raid level ship should be absolutely equal to every other Raid level ship. Rather, we wanted to ensure that fleets were capable of creating worthy fleets at any Priority Level (there are some exceptions – Shadows, for example, will always be top heavy, while Raiders will always do better at the low end).

Second, we wanted to inject more tactical choices and demands into the fleet lists, forcing players to think more when playing and giving each fleet its own unique ‘feel’, beyond that which they already have.

So, what have we done? I’ll go through the fleet lists here and highlight some of the changes made but, remember, we are still in the midst of playtesting, and the changes in the fleet lists are more mutable than those within the main rulebook.



Techno Mage Pinnaces

Earth Alliance

Still divided into three characterful fleet lists by era, we have tweaked the Earth Alliance to better suit its place in the Babylon 5 timeline. The Nova in the Early Years, for example, has rank upon rank of plasma cannon, while in the Third Age list, these are replaced by pulse cannon. There is also more of a ‘broadside’ theme to the list as a whole, where ships still have a good punch upfront (such as with the Omega’s heavy laser) but now roll far more dice to the sides.

Most ships have been tweaked to some degree, but none so much as the Poseidon. More Starfuries, more weapons, and better armour make this a superb choice as the flagship of any fleet.

Speaking of Starfuries, you will already have seen the Tiger Starfury which was released a few months ago. We have now also added the Nova Starfury and the Firebolt, the updated replacement of the Thunderbolt, allowing you to have canon battles across all eras.

The balance of the lists has been carefully spread as well. For example, in the Crusade Era list, the Chronos is a Skirmish choice, the Marathon Battle and the Warlock War level. The Victory class destroyer also makes an appearance, as a Unique ship – the *Excalibur*.

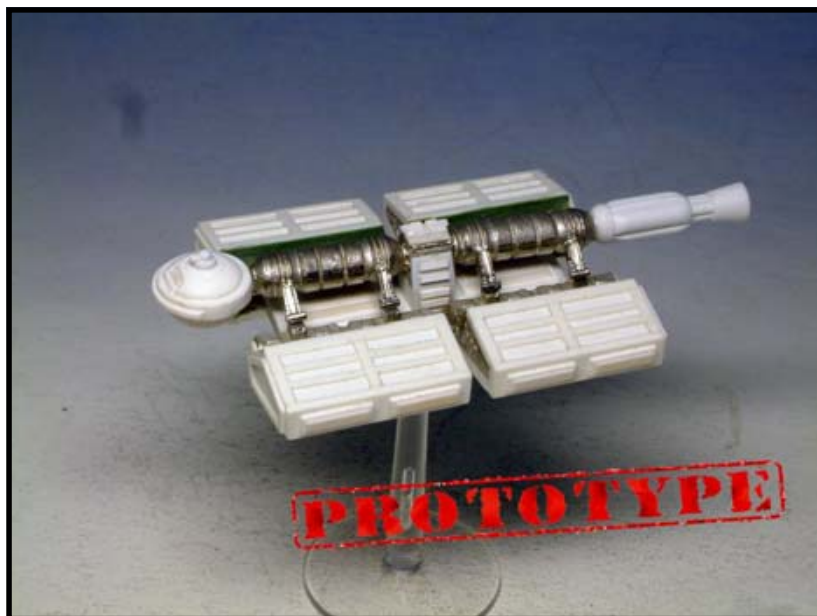
Dilgar Imperium

A great many changes here! We have further accentuated the differences between ‘battle’ ships and ‘assault’ ships in the list, giving the fleet a clear divide. There are many new variants, instantly boosting the choice Dilgar players have, and they will find greater utility (that is, more targets) for their mass drivers. A new weapon has given the Dilgar another theme, the anti-ship missile, an extremely widespread weapon among their vessels that will be capable of being launched in huge waves to cripple enemy fleets before they advance into bolter range.

The Thorun is now better in dogfights, and gains a new variant – the Torpedofighter. If you are using In Service Dates, you will also be able to use desperate tactics in the last days of the war, where Thoruns were packed with explosives and sent hurtling into enemy ships. . .



New and old Olympus models



Psi Corps carrier



Brakiri Pikatos fighter

Minbari Federation

The biggest changes here (aside from the balancing required by the changes to Beam and Mini-Beam) have revolved around Stealth. We have already revealed what your enemies can now do in order to circumvent your Stealth – well, now for the good news! Many ships (by no means all) have had a slight bump in their Stealth rating. The Leshath, for example, now has a base Stealth rating of 6+. While on the subject of the Leshath, its Scout abilities now cover the entire table, and when engaging stealthy targets yourself, you will find it can not just aid in breaking Stealth – it will remove it completely!

Narn Regime

Ah, now here was a fleet that needed some love! The first thing we did was ensure that all Narn ships were rock solid in terms of the amount of punishment they can take. Generally speaking, their ships have similar Damage/Crew scores as the ships in other fleets do one Priority Level higher. We then set about making sure they had row upon row of secondary weapons in all arcs. Get a Narn ship into a close-ranged knife fight, and you'll overwhelm any enemy with the amount of dice you throw.

However, something else was needed. . . We started taking a look at energy mines, and decided they were not quite what was reflected on the show.

We also did not like the idea that had developed of not taking fighters at all when fighting Narn. So, the all new, Mk II energy mine was born.

Now, this is a comparatively new addition to the playtesting cycle, so there may well be some tweaks. However, the current energy mine will show you where we are headed. For a start, most energy mines are now One-Shot only (the Dag'Kar and Ka'Bin'Tak have them as Slow-Loading). Now, before you start saying 'what is the point of living anymore'. . . they also get AP, Triple Damage, and a healthy amount of Attack Dice. Energy mines are now just one down from nuclear explosions, and are fully capable of ruining the day of any squadron of light ships, or finishing off a larger vessel that has been crippled.

Centauri Republic

Moving the Centauri closer to what we see on the screen, the main changes here have been to armament. Gone are the big lasers (a few lighter models remain), to be replaced by ranks of Double Damage ion cannon. Most of these are concentrated to the Fore arc, and only the larger ships, such as the Primus, have serious firepower to the sides. Very few ships in the Centauri fleet have rearward firing guns.

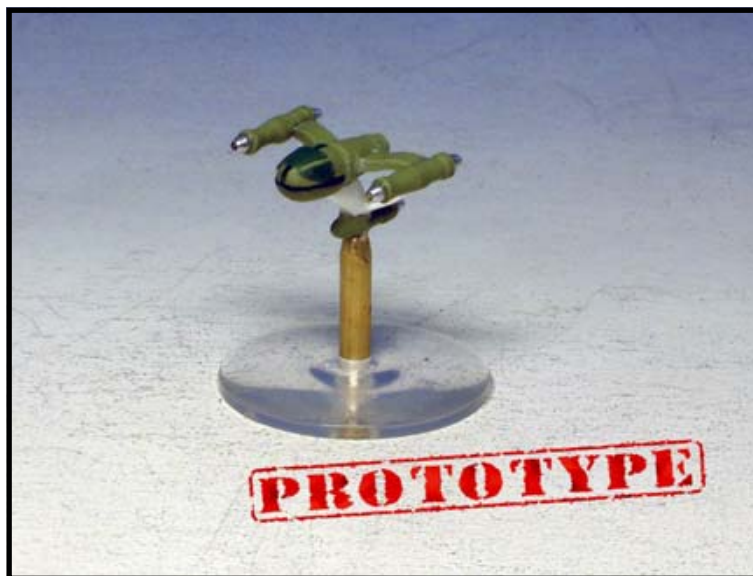
This has the effect of making the Centauri a very balanced fleet across all range bands, while ensuring tactical choices have to be made when positioning ships. Do not worry overly much though – while you have to think more now, what you have lost in terms of weaponry to the sides and rear has been pretty much made up with what you can do up front!

One last piece of advice for the fan-heads – stock up on Havens. They will be worth taking in this edition!

Interstellar Alliance

Our first aim here was to expand the fleet list, to give ISA players more choice and better balance through the Priority Levels. So, stand by for the Blue Star, the Nolo'Tar ranger frigate, the Shial heavy fighter, and the Tara'Lin command war cruiser (a Sharlin variant).

We have also had another look at the iconic White Star. Gone is the WSC-2, replaced by the White Star II, which is also a Raid level choice. The basic difference between these two designs is that the original has the Scout trait, while the White Star II carries a flight of Nials. Up to you to tailor your White Star fleet to the mission now. In turn, the White Star Gunship now takes over the role of the old WSC-2 (though more convincingly), dropping to Battle level in the process. You will also find White Star Fighters more affordable now.



Brakiri Riva fighter

The League of Non-Aligned Worlds

The league is certainly growing – you will have seen the pak'ma'ra (never spell them Pak'ma'ra, incidentally), and the Gaim will be on their way soon. However, we also wanted to personalise the existing fleets a little more.

The Abbai are still the low-powered, hard to destroy fleet we have come to know and love. However, they now have the Shields trait instead of Interceptors, allowing them to regenerate their defences every turn, and remaining pretty much immune while they remain. There are some new variants, and the long awaited Juyaca dreadnought makes an appearance.

The Brakiri have more new hulls than just about any other League fleet, I believe, and a wider choice in fighters, including the super heavy Riva. Perfect for a spot of anti-shipping missions. The new ships have not diverted us, however, and a lot of attention has been paid to revising the Avioki, making it a premier choice for all Brakiri players.

Drazi. . . Yes. . . Drazi players can look forward to a little more flexibility in their weaponry, a few more defences against fighters, and a couple of new hulls. In particular, look out for the Claweagle, a ship capable of latching on to others before disgorging troops, and the Firehawk advanced cruiser.

Finally, the Vree. In general, we have given the Vree a heavier punch with their anti-matter weapons, so players will usually be rolling less dice, but doing more damage with them! You will already have seen the Z'Takk command saucer, but look out for the Zorth light fighter, a superb craft with which to sweep space clean of enemy fighters!

Raiders

If you were hoping that the Raiders fleet would suddenly become super competitive, I am afraid you will be out of luck! We will always keep them as the underdogs of the fleets, and only experienced players are likely to do well at them in tournaments (yes, that was a challenge). At Raid level and below, they remain competent, but you will find they lose legs quickly at higher levels of play.

The Vorlons and Shadows

It has been made clear to us that people want the Vorlons and Shadows to be rock hard in battle, and yet they want to use their iconic ships in tournaments. Not the easiest combination to work with!

The first change made here is that they now use the same damage system as the Ancients in Armageddon. This makes them much easier to play, and new players will get to grips with them quickly (new players always seem to head for Shadows!).

The Vorlons now have access to Quad Damage weapons (their Heavy Cruiser), while the Transport has been dropped to Skirmish level (using the new smaller model), allowing them to field convincing forces at most Priority Levels. As for the Shadows, well, they now have a Refraction special rule to dissipate incoming damage, and they have two types of Shadow Ship. The Ancient Shadow Ship remains at Armageddon level but there is a Young variant at War level, meaning you can squeeze one in to most tournament fleets, and thus field something that looks like it came from the TV show.



‘Good’ versus ‘Evil’ Babylon 5 style





Raider strike carrier



Centauri Adira

The Drakh

We still have some work to do on this list, but I can reveal that Motherships can now transport a greater range of craft, and that there is a new Patrol Cruiser lurking in the wings. . .

The Psi Corps

What is the betting that this fleet is going to become exceedingly popular, eh? As well as having the freedom to draw from Earth Alliance fleet lists, players will also have the choice of Motherships, Shadowcloak escorts, Black Omega squadrons and Fighter Carriers.

As the In Service Date moves forward, the Psi Corps list turns into a covert Earth Alliance organisation, permitting access to the Hunter (previously in the Shadows list), the Shadow Omega, the Nemesis, and the Shadow Fury which is. . . just nasty. . .

Other Craft

The last section of this book does not cover a fleet list at all, but instead introduces ships that do not belong anywhere else. Some of these are civilian ships which you can swap out during Convoy and similar missions (yes, we are looking at doing Alien civilian vessels!).

The others are one-offs that we wanted to include, that we may do fleets for in the future, but basically are intended to be used in special scenarios and one-off games. These include the Hurr Gunship, the Lumati Transport, Ipsha War Globe and. . . the Techno Mage Pinnacle. The Pinnacle is covered in this issue of Signs and Portents.

Oh Please Hurry, August. . .

The main aim of the new A Call to Arms books is to make everything clearer, better balanced and

just generally tidy everything up after a range of supplements and fleet books. This happens every once in a while to all games that are in continual development, and it has given us a chance to draw a line under many things, update what is cool and drop what is not.

What is left is what I fully believe to be the best version of A Call to Arms ever. Long may it live!



Drakh light raiders

THE MONGOOSE INFANTRY

Ian Barstow, MI Coordinator

Welcome, all to the first of a new monthly column dedicated to the steadfast members of the Mongoose Infantry Demo Teams. This column will feature news and views from the MI, as well as showcasing demo games and offering demo credit bonus competitions to reward you hard-working MI Troopers.

This month is basically a big 'hello', just to let you know what is coming.

I didn't want to be a lone voice, though, so I asked one of our top Mongoose Infantrymen in the States, Bruce Miller, to send me some photographs from a recent demo game of Victory at Sea which he put on at RIW Hobbies in Livonia, Michigan.

This photograph sees a US navy squadron. A New Orleans Heavy cruiser is in the lead, and on fire. You can see multiple torpedoes targeting it (mini torp markers), and shell splashes from the 3 Japanese cruisers at bottom of the photo. The Fletcher destroyers at top of page have just sunk one Japanese DD, and are about to take out the other (top right corner). In the middle of the picture is a Japanese Furutaka cruiser that has just taken a salvo from the 2nd USN cruiser. The Americans win the fight, lost the New Orleans, and 1 Fletcher, sank every Japanese ship. Note all the ships are 1/1200 scale!!!

The Mongoose Infantry is growing rapidly, and with a host of great games to demo, you can see why. If you want to be involved with the MI, or if you are already a member and you need to get in contact, just email me at ibarstow@mongoosepublishing.com and get involved with demonstrating the most exciting games in tabletop wargaming!

Ian



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