

MONGOOSE PUBLISHING PRESENTS

Signs & Portents

WARGAMER

49

Sniper!

The Deadly Killers of Battlefield Evolution

Skinnie Brutes

The Scariest Racial Rejects In The Universe

Tantalus Assault Cruiser 2e

This Intriguing ACTA Ship Updated

Plus... Chang vs. Sprange in A Call to Arms, Longhurst vs. Robinson in Victory at Sea and much, much more!

S&P Wargamer 49

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Well, it's been another hectic month at Mongoose Towers, and sadly it's time to say "adios" to another old member of the crew. Ian 'Doghouse' Belcher is finally moving on to pastures new, having arrived as a fresh-faced sprog more than four years ago. I could tell you some stories about Doghouse...in fact, I will.

Ian got his nickname because for about three months after he arrived everything he touched went wrong. He'd touch a monitor and it would explode. he'd click *save* and promptly delete a file. You name it, he trashed it!

Then I could tell you about the time Doghouse killed Christmas. Those of you with long memories may well remember me referring to the tale before, but suffice to say Dog made damned sure he got his Christmas present out of his then-girlfriend before breaking the news to her that they were splitting up. That was Christmas Eve...the Triads have been after him ever since.

Eventually though Doghouse got respectable. First he became my senior editor in the RPG department and then when I moved over to Wargames he stepped up and took over RPGs completely, rising to the dizzy heights of Publications Manager.

Our last outing with Doghouse happened only last week as we attended the Publishers and Printers Grand Prix at The Raceway in Bristol. This is basically a two-and-a-quarter hour Go-Kart endurance race, and we entered a team for the first time. Myself, Doghouse, Chris 'Turbo Hippy' Longhurst, Nick the Greek, Ed the Print Manager, Adrian 'Donkey Kong' Walters and Charles-Charlie-Charles Law donned overalls and came a creditable seventh...out of seven.

If ever the pictures come out properly I promise to show you.

Ian

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<p>You Brute!</p> <p>Skinnie Brutes rules for Starship Troopers</p>  <p>10</p>	<p>Dark Secrets</p> <p>The worlds most dangerous man, Ted Chang, returns to answer Matthew's challenge in this ACTA battle report.</p>  <p>31</p>
<p>49</p>  <p>CORPORAL BLACKWELL?</p> <p>I WAS TOLD I WAS NEEDED. WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?</p>	<p>Nick Robinson and Chris Longhurst attempt to win a Victory at Sea.</p>  <p>55</p>
<p>Extinction Protocol</p>	<p>Pacific Storm</p>



Tantalus Assault Cruiser 2e

7

Updated rules for the Tantalus for ACTA 2nd Edition, along with Adrian Walters' easy-to-follow construction guide.



Tactical Manual: Update

14

Part Two of the huge Tactical Manual update covers the new scenarios in *A Call to Arms* second edition and how to win them.



Sniper!

44

Battlefield Evolution games just got a little deadlier as we up the ante with fresh rules for dealing with that terror weapon of urban combat - the sniper.

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EYE ON MONGOOSE

This Month's Releases and Gaming News



Ipsha War Globe

Arguably the strangest looking warship ever produced by any race within the galaxy, the Ipsha War Globe is a metal ring of magnetic gyroscopics used to contain a powerful singularity within. All Ipsha technology is based on the magnetic containment of these swirling green masses of unstable energy, using them to fuel their machines, arm their weapons, and essentially drive their technology en masse. Having created a powerful atomic reaction inside the magnetic/gravitic coil of their vessels, there is an unbelievable amount of energy at the ship's disposal.

Lumati Transport

Driven by a powerful gravitic engine and armed with numerous small electromagnetic weapons, the ship is capable of performing equally well on parade or in battle. Its composite hull structure is very resilient and durable, and its dual-drive jump engine system makes it capable of escaping nearly any situation with little damage. Retreating may not seem like a very fitting choice for the 'superior' Lumati, but in such cases they often claim that fighting with an inferior is beneath them.



Convention and Events Diary

6th/7th October

Old Glory World Wargames

Championships

University of Derby, Derby

<http://www.worldwargames.co.uk>

18th-21st October

Spiel 2007

Messe Essen, Essen, Germany

<http://www.merz-verlag.com/spiel/e000.php4>

20th-21st October

Firnace 2007

The Garrison Hotel, Sheffield, UK

<http://www.rpgfurnace.com>

~~**21st October**~~

~~**SELWG 2007**~~

~~Crystal Palace Sports Centre~~

~~London~~

~~<http://www.selwg.com/selwg05.html>~~

28th October

Fiasco

Royal Armouries Museum

Leeds

http://www.leedswargamesclub.org.uk/index_files/FIASCO.htm

3rd November

Crisis

Antwerp

Belgium

<http://www.tsoa.be/>

17th/18th November

Warfare

Rivermead Leisure Centre

Reading

<http://www.readingwargames.co.uk/warfare.asp>

24th November

Parade Ground

Stockton Sports Centre, Talbot Street

Stockton on Tees

24th November

Reveille II

The Downend Folk House,

Lincombe Barn

Overndale Road

Downend, Bristol

1st December

Recon

Pudsey Civic Hall

Pudsey

Leeds

STOP PRESS!

SELWG at Crystal Palace on October 21st has been cancelled!

ConQuest VEGAS

On April 18th-20th 2008 (the weekend before the GAMA Trade Show), ConQuest VEGAS will play host to what could potentially be the largest A Call to Arms Tournament in the US.

Check out <http://www.conquestvegas.com> for more details on this event, or call 805 218-9590

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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**



The Tantalus Assault Cruiser



The Earth Assault Cruiser updated for Second Edition

**Matthew Sprange,
Roman Alexander,
and Adrian Walters**

Unquestionably ugly, the Tantalus has started gaining a few supporters among Earth Alliance players, and it is not hard to see why. In scenarios such as Planetfall, it completely outclasses the Hyperion assault cruiser, due mainly to its specialisation. Despite its hodgepodge appearance, the Tantalus may become a permanent feature of Earth Alliance assault fleets.

While we have yet to release an official model for this ship, due to the modelling skill required to fit the core components, a kit is available, and you can consider this ship an official addition to the Earth Alliance Third Age and Crusade Era fleets.



Tantalus Assembly Guide



Step 1: Parts needed cleaned up and ready for assembly.



Step 2: Assemble the bridge section. Cut away the four corners as shown to allow the rotating section to fit the bridge.



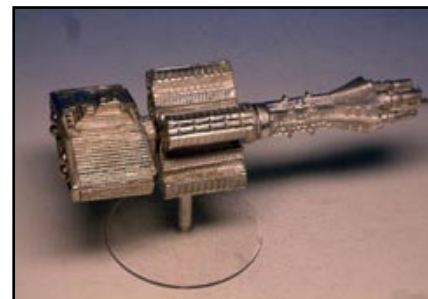
Step 3: Assemble the rotating section. Remove the cross shaped positioning lugs from each end.



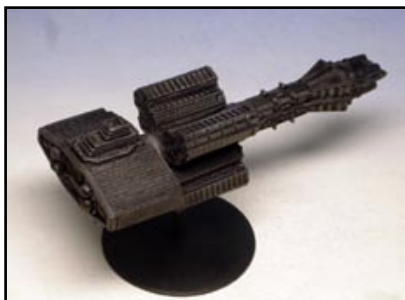
Step 4: Drill holes with a pin vice in both the bridge, rotating section and the rear hull section. ENSURE the holes line up and that the bridge and rear section are level to each other.



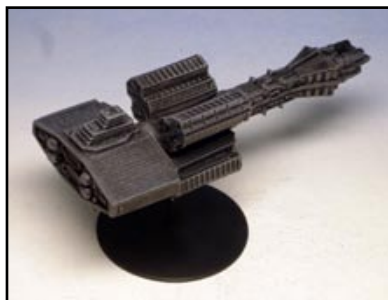
Step 5: Assemble the three parts with pins.



Step 6: Now the ship is assembled, using the stand upright, balance the ship to find the approximate balance point. Drill a 2mm hole at this point for the base.



Step 7: Ship now undercoated with black spray. Base coated with a mid grey and a wash of thinned black paint applied all over. Allow to dry thoroughly.



Step 8: Drybrush the whole ship in mid grey. Add detailing, as desired.

You can buy the Tantalus Assault Cruiser direct from us online at <http://www.mongoosepublishing.com> for \$19.95/£10.00

Alternatively, you can order through the mail using the form at the back of this issue of *Signs and Portents Wargamer*.

Tantalus-Class Assault Cruiser**Raid****Speed:** 6**Turn:** 1/45°**Hull:** 5**Damage:** 45/10**Crew:** 52/12**Troops:** 12**Craft:** 2 Aurora Starfury flights
and 2 Breaching Pod flights**Special Rules:**Anti-Fighter 2, Interceptors 2, Jump
Engine, Shuttles 4, Lumbering**In Service:** 2248+

The Tantalus is a military assault warship used by the Earth Alliance, though never in large numbers. Capable of carrying four full battalions into battle, the Tantalus has enough assault shuttles on board to transport all of its troops planetside in less than an hour, while maintaining its own fighter escort. In later years, the Starfuies were replaced by Thunderbolts, in order to provide fighter cover to the shuttles all the way through the atmosphere.



Weapon	Range	Arc	AD	Special
Heavy Pulse Cannon	12	F	8	Twin-Linked
Medium Pulse Cannon	10	A	4	Twin-Linked
Heavy Pulse Cannon	12	P	10	Twin-Linked
Heavy Pulse Cannon	12	S	10	Twin-Linked

Tantalus Assault Cruiser

The Tantalus kit can be purchased from our website at <http://www.mongoosepublishing.com>

YOU BRUTE!

Skinnies Get Reinforcements in Starship Troopers

Matthew Sprange

Last month, we previewed the Fleet Landing Party – the result of a foraging expedition into the darkest recesses of our office. As we said at the time, these were not the only models we found. Behold, the power of the mighty Brutes!

A devolved branch of the main Skinnie race, Brutes are the descendants of early colonists left to fend for themselves on the furthest reaches of civilised space. For them, the Age of Hegemony never happened and a hard life of battling hostile environments, terrible alien life forms and one another has left its mark. Brutes are powerfully built, utterly savage and make good shock troops for any enterprising Skinnie leader.

Such squads are usually armed with disruptor glaives, primitive looking weapons that nonetheless pack a heavy punch in the hands of a muscled Brute. Well-funded leaders often ensure their Brute squads are armed with at least a smattering of ranged weapons when dealing with the Mobile Infantry and while some take the cheap option of presenting the most accurate Brutes with constrictor cannon, others take advantage of their powerful build and arm them with mass drivers, a gun so heavy and powerful it is usually found mounted on vehicles.

Within their own tribes, Brutes are often ruled by a psychic Cabal, a group of mutated Skinnies from the same genestock as Brutes, whose devolved nature has led not to raw strength but powerful mental abilities. Working together, a Cabal can summon enough psychic energy to bring down even a mighty tanker bug.



BRUTES**100 POINTS**

TYPE	VALUE	SIZE	MOVE	CLOSE		SAVE	KILL	TRAITS
Brute Champion	40	1	6"	2xD6	5+	6+/4+	7+	
Brute	15	1	6"	2xD6	5+	6+/5+	7+	

Unit Size: A brute unit consists of four brutes and a champion.

Weapons/Equipment: Each unit member is equipped with a disruptor glaive.

Special Rules

Brute units are subject to the following special rules.

Berserkers: Brutes may not choose to Shoot or Hide as a reaction. However, a brute model may choose to Berserk Charge if an enemy completes an action within 10". This is treated as a normal Charge action.

Options

Brute units may purchase the following options.

Veterans: Champions may be bought heroic traits up to a total value of +25 points.

Unit Upgrades: Up to four brutes may be upgraded to brute champions for +25 points each. Up to ten extra brutes may be added to the unit for +15 points each.

Weapon Options: Up to two models may replace their disruptor glaive with one of the weapon choices below:

- * Mass Driver for +75 points.
- * Constrictor Cannon for +30 points.



...and if you want to try out Skinny Brutes for Starship Troopers Evolution...

Skinnie BRUTES

75

Racial rejects from the outer colonies, Skinnie brutes are a powerful force when they get to grips with the enemy.

Material: Champion w/disruptor glaive, 4 Brutes w/disruptor glaive

Options: Up to ten more brutes may be added for +15 points each. Up to two models may replace their disruptor glaives for constrictor cannon for +25 points each or mass driver for +75 points.

Size	Move	Close Combat	Target	Armour	Kill
1	6"	2xD6	5+	5+	7+

Squad

Weapons

Constrictor Cannon
Range: 30" Damage: 2xD6+2

Mass Driver
Range: 24" Damage: 3xD10+2

Special Rules

Agile: Skinnie brutes are extremely agile and difficult to hit. Whenever any model in this unit is about to be removed from the table as a casualty, roll a D6. On a 5, the model dodges out of the way at the last instant.

Disruptor Glaive: This weapon causes a -2 penalty to Armour rolls. And adds +2 to all the brute's Close Combat Dice.

Constrictor Cannon: Optional upgrade. This weapon causes a -2 penalty to Armour rolls.

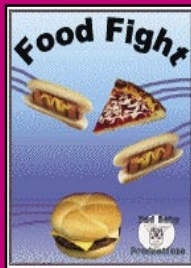
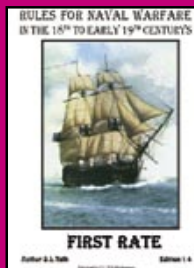
Mass Driver: Optional upgrade. This weapon causes a -3 penalty to Armour rolls, but may only fire once per turn and never as a reaction.

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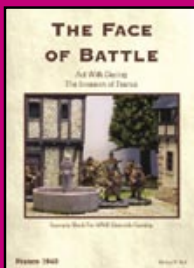
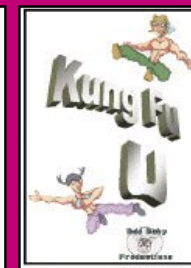
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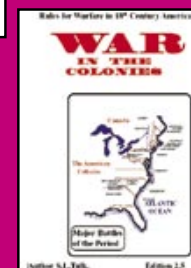
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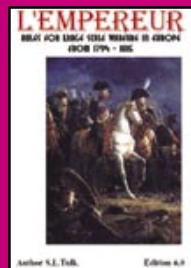


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Tactical Manual: Update



Part Two - Scenarios

Alan Oliver

Previous articles have focused on the simple job of killing the enemy, however sometimes there's more to warfare than a massive body count. This article will take a look at two things, victory points in general and specific tactics for the different scenarios found in the second edition rulebook.

It is worth noting that strict victory conditions will make games more competitive and is not always advisable for friendly games. Some of the methods that are useful for victory under strict scenario conditions promote gaming styles which in a freeform game might be close to outright gamesmanship. I'm not saying that scenarios should not be used, however you should be aware of the difference in playing styles that they will bring with them.

Victory Points

In some of the common scenarios victory is entirely down to victory points. Therefore an understanding of victory points is a good place to start.

Fleet composition

Firstly your fleet composition will determine how many victory points the enemy can get for the complete destruction of your fleet. Not all fleets offer the enemy the same amount of potential victory points.

A fleet that extensively uses larger ships will have less potential victory points for the enemy to gather as the cost of ships doubles for the first

three priority levels, then increases by fifty percent for the final two, while victory points rise at a flat rate of ten points per level. Ships one priority level higher than the scenario offer no bonus, you need to go at least two levels up to make a difference, which limits this to battles with a large amount of fleet allocation points.

So to take an extreme example; two fleets of eighteen points at patrol, one of which is 18 ships at patrol priority, the other is a single ship at Armageddon. The first fleet has a potential victory point total of 180 points, while the second has a total of only sixty points. This means that the second fleet could afford to lose his ship, and give the battlefield to the enemy, and still win as long as he has destroyed seven of the enemy ships.

As you might expect, fleets that use lots of ships of priorities lower than the scenario will have more potential victory points, however this is not so dramatic as it is for higher priority ships. This is summarised in the table below. However this is less of a problem than it appears as all of the ships need to be destroyed for the enemy to get full value out of this.

Upshifting	Upshifted PVP	Scenario level PVP
One level of upshift	20	20
Two levels of upshift	30	40
Three levels of upshift	40	80
Four levels of upshift	50	120
Five levels of upshift	60	180

Downshifting	Downshifted PVP	Scenario level PVP
One level of downshift	10	10
Two levels of downshift	12	10
Three levels of downshift	16	10
Four levels of downshift	12	10
Five levels of downshift	9	10

This does make the use of higher priority ships more attractive in a victory point scenario, as they give less to the enemy than ships of the scenario level or smaller ships.

Independent fighter wings do give the enemy victory points, and here the races vary as victory points are based upon flights destroyed, however not all races get the same number of flights in a wing. For example the Minbari only get two flights of Nial heavy fighters in a wing, so their loss only gives the enemy two victory points, whereas the Abbai Kotha medium fighter comes in a wing of eight, which is worth eight victory points when destroyed. Basically the better the fighter is, the less victory points you give away by taking them.

Surrendered ships

Forcing a ship to surrender is a great bonus as it doubles the victory points that the ship is worth. However given the low victory point value put on ships smaller than the scenario on an individual basis, they make for poor quality targets for capture. Obviously capturing the biggest ship that the enemy has will help secure victory, however this is likely to be a tough job, if even possible.

Tactical Withdrawal

Tactical withdrawal can be a useful way of reducing the victory points that the enemy will receive from your ships if they are close to destruction anyway. Where possible you should look to have a ship move towards the edge of the engagement as it gets damaged, so that it can run for the table edge if it looks like destruction is imminent. In campaign play this is doubly useful as it also keeps the ship alive for later repair, as well as denying the enemy 75% of its victory point value.

If the ship is already crippled or reduced to skeleton crew then it gets even better, as the enemy will get no additional victory points when it withdraws. The enemy only gets one lot of victory points per ship, and if crippled or on skeleton crew, then they have already got 25% of its victory point value, so the withdrawal gives away nothing.

It is worth knowing how many victory points your fleet is worth when it withdraws. If at any stage you have earned more victory points than this amount and can withdraw safely, then that can give you a quick and clean win. However remember to take into account holding the ground.

Holding the ground

The fleet that holds the ground at the end of the battle will get a five victory point reward for doing so. In a decisive battle this will not be sufficient to tip the balance one way or another, but if the battle has been close then this could make the difference between victory and defeat. For this reason it is worth keeping a rough total of the victory points as your going along, so that you will know if a withdrawal will give the enemy victory.

Also there are some scenarios that operate on victory points, but do not award any points for holding the ground due to the specific circumstances of the scenario.



Specific Scenarios

Ambush at Beta 3

Page 22

This training scenario features a single Hyperion cruiser against a pair of Vorchan warships, fleet selection is already done, you just have to work with what you have. The focus of the scenario is initiative, with the earthforce hyperion cruiser trying to stay alive long enough to win the initiative and be able to use its main weapon to kill a Vorchan warship.

The Earth Alliance

You have several advantages to work with. Firstly your main beam is quite capable of killing a Vorchan warship in one hit. Much of your tactics will be based around surviving long enough to get a hit in with the beam to knock one of the Vorchans out of the fight. Remember that you also have the rear beam, and while only half the attack dice, it is still capable of putting a dent into a skirmish priority ship.

Secondly you have a fighter, and the Vorchans have no anti-fighter firepower to kill it. As long as it stays outside of their forward arc your Aurora can be consistently hitting them for a point or two of damage. It may not sound much, but they are small ships.

Thirdly you have interceptors on your ship, and all their firepower can be intercepted. This will not stop all their fire, but will help keep you alive a little longer.



The Centauri

You outnumber the enemy, and have a higher initiative bonus, so will be able to force the Hyperion into moving first most turns, which will enable you to avoid his main beam. This is something to try and achieve as one good hit from that beam could win him the battle.

While you could keep one of the Vorchan warships back to ensure that the one engaging the Hyperion moves after it does, the Hyperion has enough secondary firepower and defences that he may win that exchange. Up close your two Vorchan warships heavily outgun the Hyperion, so concentrated fire should bring it down, but you will need to use both ships at the same time to do this.

If the dice let you down and you have to move first you will find it difficult to avoid giving him a boresight shot of some sort. However if you have the choice, give him a shot with his rear rather than forward heavy laser cannon. It is still a beam and could easily gut your ship, but with only half the dice the odds are better for your survival.

Ambush

Page 50

This is pretty much a straight slugging match, with the added fun of starting at close range and uneven forces.

Defender

The first turn will be decisive, as if your enemy can kill 40% of your fleet or more then it becomes a fair fight. Obviously you will not want to take fragile ships if you can avoid it, as that first turn's fire will take too many of them down. If your fleet includes any weak ships they will be the first ships targeted, so try and avoid any weak ships and select a uniform fleet.

The attacker could come from either side, so deploy your fleet down the centre of the deployment zone to maximise the distance between you and him, if you can keep him out of range with some ships on turn one, that will negate some of his advantage.

His ships don't give you any victory points if they disengage, so you are looking to kill enemy ships rather than drive them off, better to put overwhelming firepower into one ship and turn it into a pretty glowing ball of gas than do serious damage to two ships and see them both limp away from the engagement.

Attacker

The basic objective here is to do as much damage as possible on turn one when the enemy cannot effectively engage you. You should be able to deploy close enough to the enemy fleet to get into weapons range on the first turn, and should deploy your ships to do so.

An alternative is the hyperspace ambush. Have a scout in your deployment zone, hiding in an asteroid field for the stealth increase, which will allow you to jump your fleet in directly behind the enemy, allowing instant close range assault on the enemy fleet. However not all fleets have the jump engines to do this effectively.

Long range fleets will be able to sit in their deployment zone and bombard the enemy from a distance. The Minbari will be masters of this as they can liberally scatter asteroid fields through their deployment zone, and sit in them with stealth ranging from 6+ to 8+, possibly even 9+ if at long range. Against this the defender will be able to do very little, and the long range of neutron lasers and advanced neutron lasers should ensure that the enemy cannot get out of range of the Minbari, forcing them to slowly turn to engage you, giving you several turns of firing while they come about and close to engage.

After the first turn, look at the situation and decide if you have done enough to be able to win the fight or not. If you haven't, then now is the time to withdraw, before your enemy can bring his superior numbers to bear on your smaller fleet. Withdrawn ships do not give the enemy any victory points, so a withdrawal without taking casualties will secure you a win, assuming you did some damage to the enemy. If you have, then you can carry on with the assault and turn a quick ambush to pick off key ships into a general assault to destroy an enemy fleet, earning yourself much cudos in the fleet officers club, not to mention free drinks aplenty.

Annihilation

Page 51

The ultimate in stand up slugging matches, everything comes down to having the last operational ship in the area, nothing else matters.

Fleet selection will be based purely on combat potential of the ships involved. Light and fast ships will probably be of less use than the big lumbering giants in the fleet, unless you are facing an enemy with an obvious blind spot that you can rely on taking advantage of to survive.



Deployment areas are thirty six inches apart, so a long range fleet like the Minbari may be able to hang back and get a turn of unanswered fire in while the enemy closes. Short range fleets will have to try and be aimed in the right direction in order to use Max Chat to close the range quickly. Those fleets that carry lots of useful fighters on the line warships may want to use the first turn to

scramble as many of their fighters as possible, as will any carriers brought to the battle.

Tactical withdrawal is of no use in this battle, instead keep all ships in the fight for as long as you can, and get any crippled ships as close to the enemy as you can so that their death and explosion might take more of the enemy with them. Ramming is also a highly desirable possibility as well, turning the crippling of one of your ships into something useful.

Assassination

Page 52

This is all about getting personal, and trying to kill a specific target. Victory and defeat are determined by victory points, and the ship targeted for assassination doesn't offer enough of a bonus to win or lose the battle on it's own. This therefore comes down to a normal engagement between equal forces.

Defender

One of the problems is that you would not normally know which of your ships the enemy was trying to kill. However you can force his hand as to which ship he selects for assassination. If you only have one ship at the highest priority level you use, then the attack must select this ship. If the number of allocation points is high enough you should select a ship at least two levels above that of the scenario, in which case his bonus for killing it will be offset by the reduced number of victory points due to priority level.

Be aware that keeping the target ship out of combat to deny the enemy the points for killing it can be counter productive if it leaves the rest of the fleet short of firepower. Of course if the target ship is a specialist ship, such as a heavy carrier, then it can still perform it's function while hanging back and being protected, which makes the Earth Alliance Poseidon supercarrier an ideal choice.

Attacker

Don't get too fixated on the target ship, as at only ten victory points it is not going to win you the battle on it's own. However do target it if given the chance.

Against a race that lacks the defences to stop long range bombardment then this can allow you to pick off the target. An example might be using Sagittarius cruisers against the Dilgar who lack the interceptors to stop long range missile bombardment.

If the defender takes the target ship well away from the battle then he's denying himself the use of one of the biggest ship in his fleet. In this case engage the rest of his fleet, as he'll be at a numerical disadvantage.

Blockade

Page 53

Not every battle is about killing the enemy, and this one is only about getting through the blockade to the planet beyond.

Defender

When selecting blockade ships you will need long range firepower, preferably without having to rely on boresight weapons. The easiest way for the

attacker to win is to punch through your blockade and off the other side of the table. Assuming he selects ships of the appropriate speed he can be across in three turns, which gives you just one firing opportunity to stop him, or at least slow him down. This means you need to have the range to hit him on turn two, and by preference weapons with the precise trait to gain extra critical hits in the hopes of slowing his ships down. Bombardment ships with racks of missiles are good for this, as they have the range and precise trait to do the job. Also the fact that most are slow loading won't matter, as you'll only get the one shot in anyway.

Your deployment needs to be at the forward edge of your deployment zone. As an example if using Earthforce Sagittarius missile cruisers, split your fleet into two groups. One should be placed about thirty inches from one end of the table, and the other group should be the same distance from the other end. On a seventy two inch table this will leave a gap between the two groups of twelve inches. The attacker will not try and dive between the two groups so will be forced to dive down one side of the battlefield, trying to stay out of range from the further group. You can do nothing on turn one, but on turn two you may be able to get both groups firing, which may be enough.

Attacker

The only thing that matters is getting your ships off the board on the other side of the blockade. Your top priority is speed, take ships at speed twelve or above, that way at Max chat you can be off the board on the third turn. After speed are defensive systems, whether it's good interceptors, Gravitic energy grid, stealth or whatever else, anything to make your ship more difficult to hit is useful. When it comes down to it even a good hull and damage ratings may be enough to get you

over the finishing line. With speed 12 or above ships this should be a cake walk, you will only lose if he gets a lucky critical on turn two.

Deployment will depend on how the enemy has set up and the size of the table, however you will generally be better off sliding down one of the table edges than trying to charge through the centre. You should try and use as large a table as possible, at least 72" if not 96" in width, as this spreads the blockade out over a wider area and gives you a much better chance of getting through. If the blockader has picked slow ships, go for the opposite end of the table to them as they won't get a shot in. However you cannot count on the blockader doing anything stupid, so you will have to assume that they will be well positioned to engage you. As any firing that you do will not help so special actions that aid in defence at the cost of firepower might look useful, however they will stop you using the Max chat approach so don't be tempted.

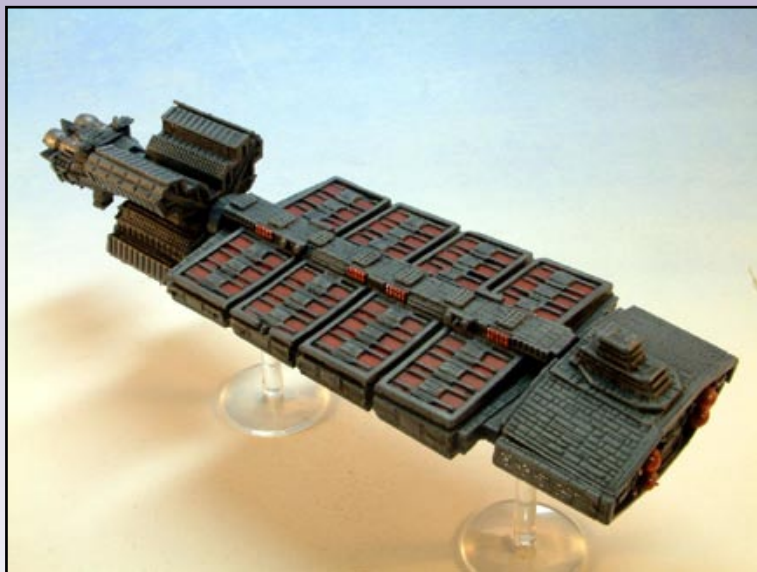
Call to Arms

Page 54

This is a stand up fight starting at close range, and decided by victory points.

Fleet selection will be based upon the most effective combat ships in your fleet, according to your style of combat. As fleets can start as little as 24" apart short range but fast fleets such as the Dilgar may be able to get into range on turn one.

Remember that a ship that withdraws off the table, either off a table edge or into hyperspace is worth less to the enemy than a destroyed ship, so you should seek to get ships out of the conflict zone if you can when they take heavy damage. If possible pull them from the thick of the fighting



but keep them on the table for the time being, as they may be able to contribute something from the edges without being destroyed, and it is easier to jump or run if you are not in the middle of the fighting.

Carrier Clash

Page 55

This is another straight victory point battle in general. However the highest priority level ship that you can use has to have at least two flights of fighters or auxiliary craft. That doesn't mean that it has to be a carrier. For example most war and Armageddon level ships come with their own fighters, and some of them even have the carrier trait, but they are not specifically carriers.

The obvious intention of the scenario is to have two carrier led fleets engaging each other at range, using their fighters to attack the enemy carrier group. The scenario can be played that way, however for most fleets you are not limited to

having the carrier as your biggest ship, as there are bigger ships that carry the required number of fighters. Make sure that you and your opponent are both fighting the same battle.

Convoy Duty

Page 56

In most cases, this is what interstellar war is all about, cutting off the trade between systems and destroying the enemies economy to the point

where they cannot carry on the war. Victory is decided by victory points for destroying enemy ships, but with a bonus for killing or protecting the civilian ships.

Attacker

You have a smaller fleet of ships, so if this degenerates into a stand up fight then you are likely to lose. Instead you are looking at a quick engagement, damaging the defending fleet and killing a number of the civilian ships then getting away without taking too much in the way of casualties.

If you can, take a number of ships with jump engines and take a scout as well. That way you can jump in part of your fleet and open fire on the civilian ships on the turn you arrive. Obviously the scout will have to have come onto the table itself. If you are lucky the enemy may have moved some of his defending ships off to intercept the

scout, pulling some of the defences away from the civilian ships.

Long range bombardment is another approach, to which the defender has only two possible responses. Firstly he can use his fighters as interceptors on the civilian ships, which lack interceptors of their own. Secondly he can send his ships out to attack your bombardment ships. Of course different races have different quality bombardment ships ranging from the Drazi Darkhawk missile cruiser to the Dilgar Mankhat dreadnought.

Fighters can be used to attack the civilian shipping while dancing around the escorting ships. However this only works if your fighters are better than the defenders, or you will have significantly more of them. But be aware, civilian ships do have anti fighter capability, although not much of it.

Defender

Keep your ships with the civilian ships until the attack begins, as between both long table edges and jump points he can attack you from any direction. If any ships come in from the table edges a long way from your fleet, don't send more than twenty to forty percent of your fleet after them, that way you will always have more ships protecting the civilians than the attack can bring to bear.

Look at selecting two different ship types to make up your fleet. The first are the defensive ships to protect the civilians, which should make up at least three fifths of your fleet. These can and should be slow ships, as they will be staying with the civilian ships at all times. Civilian ships are only speed four, so even Dilgar assault ships can be used to defend them. The rest of your fleet should be faster attack ships to be used to hunt down attackers away from the convoy and close on and engage bombardment ships attacking from long range.

Remember to take escort ships if your race uses them, as they can add to the anti fighter defences of the civilian ships, making fighter attack runs that much more difficult. This works best for the Centauri fleet with their guardian arrays, as they can transfer interceptors to the civilian ships as well.

Flee to the Jump Gate

Page 57

Similar to blockade running in that the fleeing fleet gains victory points for their own ships that escape, except that in this scenario the defender also gets victory points for destroying enemy ships.

Defender

For a start, you are thirty six inches away from the jump gate, assuming a 72" wide table. This means that you have less ground to cover than you do in the blockade runner scenario. However you need to activate the jump gate, for which you need to beat the elite jump gate crew in an opposed crew check, this is not something that you can rely on doing on the first turn you are in range.

The alternative is to turn the tables on the attacker and deploy in such a way that you can engage the ships that are deployed in the rear corners. Once they have been destroyed then you can look at engaging the remaining attackers as they close. This is an ambitious way of trying to win the scenario, however bare in mind that if you can destroy more than sixty percent of the attacking fleet and still get something out through the jump gate, whatever it's condition, you cannot lose on victory points.

Attacker

First choice is whether to deploy ships on the table at the start of the engagement. If the defending fleet has deployed to engage any ships in these corners it may be better to bring the entire fleet out of hyperspace on turn two, simply to present a united fleet to the defender, preventing him from picking off your ships in detail.

Any ships deployed behind the defending fleet need to be fast enough to keep them in weapons range and tough enough to survive the sort of firepower that they can bring to bare. How much this will be will depend on the defending fleet. If they are Vree, you'll be facing all of their firepower and chase ships shouldn't be used. Against the Centauri however they have minimal rear firepower and chasing ships will be relatively safe.

It may be worth taking a scout in a higher priority battle, and using it as one of the two starting ships. This means that the ships entering through the jump point on turn two will be able to fire on the enemy if they are within arc and range. Getting that extra turns firing in has got to be a good thing.

If the defender is trying to make a fight of it you will have to pull damaged ships out of the fighting where possible to prevent their destruction, denying him the victory points.

Planetary Assault

Page 58

Everything depends on the planet resisting or being captured, so make sure your up to date on the planetary assault rules.

Defending fleet

To win the battle you must have both emplacements and troops left on the planet surface after 12 turns, or sooner if the attacking fleet runs out of troops to attack the planet with.

The attacker has to sit in orbit to attack the emplacements on the ground and while doing so the ship cannot engage the defending fleet. To kill the troops, apart from those that die as the emplacements are destroyed, he must either send in fighters to attack them or land troops. Overall this is a difficult task for the attacker, only made worse by the time limit.

For a start, the longer that you can keep attacking ships away from the planet the better. If the attackers spend half the battle engaging your fleet rather than attacking the planet, this is a good thing for you. However don't sacrifice all of your ships to keep him away from the planet, as you will still need some ships to engage the attackers while they fire on the emplacements.

To counter the fighter attacks on the planet, mass all or most of your fighters at the planet and use them to engage the enemy fighters in dogfights. It doesn't matter if your ships take more damage because of the lack of fighter cover, only the planet matters.

Lastly to counter troop landings you will need to be aware of which ships represent the greatest threat to your ground troops in an assault and destroy them on sight. Serious threats include ships with high numbers of troops, those with plentiful shuttles to transport them down to the planet, and most dangerous of all are atmosphere capable troop ships. The most fearsome planetary

assault ships are the Dilgar Warhant and Kartrik assault ships, which not only have shuttles and plentiful troops, but also have virus bomb racks that can be used to directly attack defending troops on the surface. The Rohric is even worse, being atmospheric it can land on the surface and deposit six troops directly into the battle, then take off and virus bomb the survivors. Other atmosphere capable assault ships to watch out for are the Minbari Torotha frigate with three troops, the Brakiri Ikorta light assault cruiser with ten troops and the Drazi Sleekbird assault cruiser with four troops.

In addition if you have troops on your own ships, especially those with shuttles, get them down onto the planet to reinforce the troops that are already there. It doesn't matter if your ships are empty and vulnerable to capture themselves, as it's only possession of the planet that affects victory. Or if you want to really mess with the attacker, try capturing his ships in orbit, forcing him to use his troops defending his own ships rather than attacking the planet.

Attacker

Planetary assaults are not easy, no doubt about it. Twelve turns may seem like a long time, however it will disappear quickly.

You need to select ships suitable for the assault. First priority is assault ships, anything with masses of troops will help, but those with shuttles will be able to get those troops into action easier. Those listed above that can land directly on the planet are especially valuable.

You will need to bring in as much of your fleet from hyperspace to get them over the planet quickly. It is worth considering taking a couple of scouts on the table at the start then bring the

rest of your fleet in from hyperspace. They will be able to attack on the turn they arrive, doing damage to the defenders and will be within close range of the planet.

Get ships into the planet atmosphere as quickly as possible to start destroying the emplacements. If possible you don't want to send in your own troops while there are still intact emplacements due to the bonus that this gives to the defenders. If you can destroy them quickly enough you will be able to wait before you send in the troops, but don't wait too long. For example a troop ship with eight troops but no shuttles should start attacks on the planet by turn five, otherwise you will run out of time before you use all your troops.

Planetfall

Page 59

A far simpler scenario than the planetary assault, this battle will be decided by victory points as standard, although with a bonus to the fleet that has the most troops on the planet at the end of the scenario.

In general fleets will be general combat fleets, but with assault ships added. However certain types of assault ships, like those of the Dilgar, will be of less use as ships cannot enter from hyperspace and they will be slow to reach the planet. However with only 18" to cover, even Dilgar assault ships can reach the planet in four or five turns.

As the first race to land troops on the planet counts as the defender, which means that they will roll to kill enemy troops second, this gives the advantage to the other fleet. You may get the situation where neither fleet wants to be the first to land on the planet and dance around it, playing chicken.

It is worth remembering that not holding the planet but killing the enemy fleet will still give you victory.

Recon Run

Page 60

Battle uses victory points, however the rules for scanning and end of scenario alter the normal dynamic.

Defending fleet

You want to keep the attackers on the table for as long as possible so that your advantage in ship numbers can be made to work for you.



The engagement isn't over until either all the attackers are dead, they've scanned all your ships or it's the end of turn twelve. This means you want to increase the number of ships you have, downshifting a priority level with most of your points will be advisable.

Do not deploy all your fleet together, but have at least one ship at the opposite end of your deployment zone to the other ships. The attacker can choose which table edge he comes in from and will obviously bring his fleet on from the edge nearest to your fleet. If there is one ship way across the table, this will prevent the battle from ending suddenly with the attackers having scanned your entire fleet.

You will want a runner to prolong the battle, a fast ship that can move to avoid the attacking ships getting into scanning range, and so prevent them from fleeing from the battle. If this ship is also has long range firepower or other abilities and can contribute to the battle as well, then so much the better.

When selecting your other ships concentrate on offensive firepower, you need to rack up victory points from killing enemy ships quickly to keep pace with the attacker. Where possible kill off attacking ships as each ship you kill will give the attacker one less ship to scan with. If given the option, kill ships with better crews first, as the occasional failed roll to scan will further complicate the attackers job.

Attacking fleet

If this was a straight stand up fight, you'd be unlikely to win at a five to three disadvantage. However the victory points that you can get from scanning ships in addition to those for killing ships may be enough to grant you a victory, and

the defender may not be prepared to handle such an engagement.

It will be worth dropping one of your points down a couple of priorities for four ships, just to give you the numbers to get in and scan the enemy quickly, but bear in mind that small ships will be vulnerable to sudden death. However if scanning a ship of the priority level of the scenario, even if your small ship is killed in the process, if it manages the scan it will still earn you more victory points than the enemy gains for killing it.

The other two thirds of your fleet should be fast hunter killer ships, packing enough firepower to actually damage enemy ships and with enough speed to get in close on the ships. Deploy all your ships on the table at the start, unless your fleet is so slow that they will be unable to reach scanning range till turn three or later. The advantage of jumping a ship in is outweighed by the loss of scanning opportunities.

If using random crew qualities, be aware of which ships have the most experienced crews, as they will be the ships most likely to scan successfully first time. Ships with especially poor crews should be used to fight the enemy rather than relied on for scanning.

Ideally you will be able to get within scanning range of the enemy ships on turn one, have finished scanning the rest of the enemy on turn two, hopefully without losing a ship. If done correctly the battle can be over in two turns.

Rescue

Page 61

This is another simple battle decided by victory points. The bonus for possessing the rescue ship

is only ten victory points, which in a large battle may be insignificant.

That the highest priority level ship within six inches of the rescue ship claims the bonus means that higher priority ships will be an advantage. Even if you cannot destroy or drive off the enemy, if you have an Armageddon priority ship and the enemies biggest ship is only battle priority, then you can just park by the rescue ship and claim the bonus.

Other than the struggle for control over the rescue ship it is just another straight forward engagement where killing or driving off the enemy is the objective, so build your fleet around high priority combat ships.

Space Superiority

Page 62

Basically this is another stand up fight decided by victory points, however the bonus points for controlling sectors of the table can mount up to thirty points on a four by six foot table or forty points on a four by eight table. This is more than those found in most scenarios and can make a difference.

Unlike most battles your fleet will have to spread out to cover as much ground as possible. During the early stages of the battle it will not matter so much, but as turn twelve approaches or the enemy is starting to crumble, you will need to start spreading your fleet out to control as many of the sectors as possible. If you do not, it may be possible for the enemy to win after destroying some of your ships then running away. You'll be left with five points for holding one sector, five for controlling the battlefield and a quarter of the value of the enemy fleet which might be as little

as ten points. If they have killed three ships at the priority level of the battle, that's still a win for them.

Keeping some ships in hyperspace to claim or contest empty parts of the table in the closing stages of the battle is certainly valid. Low priority ships with their own jump engines are ideal for this as their loss from the main battle line will not be so painful. This will be particularly useful on the larger tables where even a fast ship can take three or four turns to cover the length of the table.

Supply Ship

Page 63

While destruction of the enemy ships will ultimately determine victory in this scenario, the civilian ships may be significant in tipping the balance if the game is close. The higher the priority of the battle then the more civilian ships there will be to defend or attack, and the lower the number of fleet allocation points available then the more significant the victory points for the civilian ships will become. Although the victory points from the civilian ships will never be higher than those available from destroying the enemy fleet.

Defender

The civilian ships should be set up in orbit around the planet, that way they will at least be sheltered from one direction. Obviously the attacker is going to deploy on the same side of the planet as the civilian ships, however if they are already set up to orbit around the planet, then they can orbit into cover quickly.

If the attacker is going for the civilian ships first then your escorts and fighters can be used to bolster their weak defences, transferring anti fighter fire

or providing interceptors where appropriate. If the attacker targets the defending fleet, then use your fighters to support your fleet according to their role.

If the attacker has massed on one side of the planet and has no reserves in hyperspace it may be worth the civilian ships making a dash away from them on the other side of the planet. Using the planet as cover to get out of weapons range on the attacking fleet could keep a good number of civilian ships safe.

Attacker

Firstly the Narn, Gaim and Brakiri, assuming they have access to a Takata, will be able to do some serious damage with energy mines. The defender fleet and civilian ships will probably start in close formation that just begs to be nuked. Fleets heavy on energy mine weapons will certainly have some fun here.

Don't let the defender get settled into one sort of fight or the other, switch targets between his fleet and civilian ships to confuse him and get the best out of your firepower. Of course, if you can kill all of his warships, then the civilian ships are just extra target practice, and even if you don't get that far each enemy war ship destroyed is a ship not causing you damage.

Due to the weak hull on most civilian ships beam and mini-beam weapons are wasted on them. Save

these for the defending fleet and use secondary batteries or long range missiles on the civilian ships. Or energy mine weapons if you have them of course. You probably want to have killed over half of the civilian ships at least over the course of the battle.

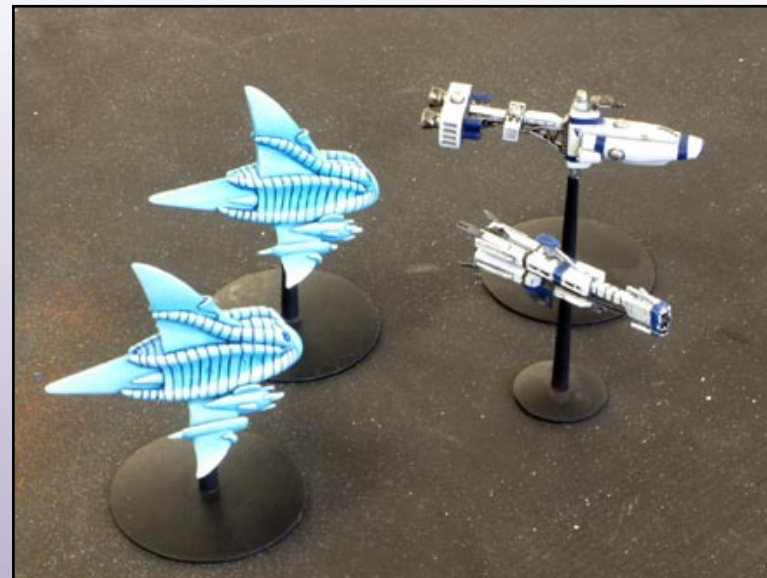
Battle of the Line

Page 64

If you are playing the Earth Alliance fleet, think of this as a painful learning experience. If you are playing the Minbari, this is just target practice.

Earth Alliance

To win, all you have to do is have one ship still functional at the end of six turns. However this is not that likely. Concentrate firepower into one Sharlin at a time and try and cut down on the amount of damage you will be taking.



The Nova dreadnoughts will have to Max Chat towards the Sharlin, and they may represent enough of a threat to draw the Minbari fire for a couple of turns, leaving the heavy hitting Hyperion cruisers to try and get some good heavy laser hits in.

The Olympus corvettes can scatter to the far corners of the map just to try and make life more difficult for the Minbari, their turret mounted missiles will help with this.

Minbari

On the first turn you will have seven heavy batteries of Neutron lasers to put into the human fleet. Each should hit a separate ship so that more of their fleet is damaged and suffering the effects of critical hits. On the first turn you may not even be getting any return fire, depending on the range. Where possible roll forward slowly to keep the range open, as long as you have targets in range.

Fire whichever ship the humans have concentrated their fire on first, you should have the initiative to fire before the humans, and as his big guns are boresighted, you will know which ship he is targeting. This is so that if the humans get a lucky critical hit and reduce your firepower, it will not affect this turn's firing.

You have eighteen human ships to destroy, with seven batteries of Neutron lasers, by turn three you will be starting to put shots into ships already hit. The Olympus corvettes may die from the first shot, and even if they don't they are likely to be badly enough damaged that Fusion cannon fire and Nials will be able to finish them off. Hyperion cruisers will survive one Neutron laser shot but the second is likely to kill them off. It is the solid block of Nova dreadnoughts that will

take the most damage to kill, probably needing three shots each. This gives a total of forty volleys of fire to destroy the entire fleet, and in six turns you can get out forty two just from the front batteries. This means that even without good luck you should be able to win this comfortably.

Assault on Ragesh 3

Page 65

This is a simple assault, a couple of Narn ships against a weak station.

Narn

You have little to think about here, Max Chat towards the station and open fire as soon as you can, then park there and keep pounding.

One option would be to keep the Frazi fighters out of range of the station until it's past its first threshold as there is a chance that it will lose its anti-fighter trait when this happens. If it does then the fighters can pile in and finish the job in relative safety. If it doesn't, then throw them in anyway, they will take horrible casualties but they have little else to do.

Given the number of troops you carry, and the number on board the station you are unlikely to be able to conduct a successful assault on it, however with twenty four troops it may be worth trying anyway. That many troops have got to be good for something, right?

Centauri

Firstly, hope your crew wake up before the battle is all over. A series of bad dice rolls could leave you just taking damage for much of the game, not good fun for anyone. Once the station wakes

up you start blasting away at the ships, and hope that they crumble before you do. However there is very little you can do here other than roll dice well.

Quadrant 37

Page 66

This is not a fair fight, don't have any illusions about that. The shadows have all the fun in this one, just like the Narn did in the previous scenario.

Narn

You will have to concentrate fire from your ships and station on a single shadow ship and hope that you can do enough damage to take it out of the fight. Between shields and self repair, you will need to do between seven and seventeen damage a turn just to overcome its repairs.

Your fighters will outnumber the shadow fighters four to one, which means you should be able to take them out and then start working on the shadow ships themselves, which do not have any anti-fighter capabilities. This will give you a chance to whittle away at their shields at the start of each turn.

Shadows

With a station and a planet on the map, it may be possible to fight from the shadow of the planet, thereby avoiding fire from the station while you deal with the mobile units. If nothing else this shadow will be a good place to move to while your ship heals and shields repair.

You are short on fighters to deal with the Narn Frazi, so will have to get as many Frazi kills with them as possible. Once you've lost your fighters

you will have some difficulty dealing with the Frazi.

You can out manoeuvre the Narn ships, and have the range advantage, so against the T'Loth cruisers you should be able to avoid taking much damage. On the first turn when the Narn will not be able to fire at all, you can afford to get close and either rip into the base to start working through that, or try and take out the cruisers. However remember that these cruisers take a lot of damage to kill, even under the mighty beams of a shadow ship they will not die instantly.

The Second Battle for Quadrant 14

Page 67

This battle is decided by the survival or otherwise of the Narn fleet. This means that Centauri casualties in destroying the Narn ships are irrelevant to the battle.

Centauri

You outnumber the enemy five to three, and you don't have to worry about casualties in this battle, so your fleet should concentrate on hard hitting ships, at the expense of strong defences if necessary. You have to cross a lot of open space to get into range with the Narn fleet, and they have the range advantage with their heavy laser cannon, Ion torpedoes and energy mines, so you will take some damage as you close. Having several Elutarian bombardment destroyers to return fire at long ranges will help, Sulust escort destroyers also have long ranged battle lasers that may be able to pick off targets a turn earlier than the rest of the fleet. Dargan strike cruisers have the speed to get into range that much quicker, and have stealth to defend them against the long range fire as they close on the enemy.

Whether you should go for a vast fleet of lighter ships or concentrate on the higher priorities is a matter of personal choice, however against the battery of energy mines that you could be facing, large swarms of skirmish and patrol ships may well prove to be too fragile. Instead you are probably looking at Raid and battle priority ships for the battle line, possibly including an Ocuturion to command and a couple of Corvan scouts for increased accuracy on key targets. Maximus frigates as escorts are going to be less useful as you are not worried by the damage you take.

Narn

The first priority with your ships is survivability, and with Narn ships that comes down to hull six and plenty of hits whenever possible.

Being outnumbered you will have a hard time getting big ships to line up their heavy laser cannon as the Centauri fleet will be able to initiative sink you to oblivion. You will probably want to leave the Bin Tak behind, beautiful as she is, simply because it ties too much of your firepower up in a single ship. This means you will be looking at battle and raid priority ships, skirmish ships are likely to be too fragile to survive this fight.

Var'Nic long range destroyers will make tough raid level ships of choice, still being capable of damaging the enemy but being tough enough to survive. Dag'Kar missile frigates will provide a recurring energy mine battery to thin out the lighter centauri ships and threaten even the bigger ships. A G'Karith in the mix to provide light energy mine fire each turn just to keep the fighters under control may be worth while, and it may prove a scenario winner to have a T'Rann heavy carrier hiding behind the planet where it cannot be easily targeted. Even once they gain line of sight to it, there is still the massive damage

and crew ratings to get through, which may just tip the balance in the scenario.

As for the bigger ships, you may want to go with three G'Quan heavy cruisers for a larger first wave energy mine volley, or swap one of them for a G'Tal command cruiser to gain the better initiative bonus.

The Long Twilight Struggle

Page 68

This battle is decided by specific objectives for both forces, and the Narn have three different ways that they can win. Shadows are simpler, they just have the one objective, kill the Narn ships.

Shadows

Victory is simple, just destroy all seven Narn G'Quan heavy cruisers. With five young shadow ships and a space station, this shouldn't be too much of a problem as you are not under any time limit.

You will face a wave of energy mines on turn one, and the simplest way to deal with them is to spread your ships out far enough that no mine can catch more than the one ship. This is likely to mean that one ship will take the brunt of the firing, possibly all seven energy mines, which could hurt.

An alternative would be to place two ships closer together at the back of your fleet so that they become the choice energy mine targets, knowing that you will be pulling them out of the fight for a few turns to heal up after they take the massed energy mine at the start. However this is a high risk tactic as the massed energy mines are likely to

do enough damage to take out both ships. All it would gain you is the choice of which ships get hit, and all your ships are the same, so this is of little advantage.

You have less fighters than the Narn, but should have enough to stop the Frazi from attacking your ships, which would potentially be a problem for you.

Narn

Three options for victory; destruction of all five shadow ships, destruction of the space station or successful withdrawal.

Destruction of the five shadow ships will be a difficult proposition, however if you can get the entire fleet's energy mines hitting three of the shadow ships then you have a chance of getting the job done. Forty two dice of energy mine at triple damage may well be enough to kill a young shadow ship. Hitting three ships will tip the balance in your favour, making this battle much more winnable. Even just hitting two of the shadow ships with the full battery of energy mines will improve your chances.

The second option is the destruction of the space station itself, your original target. The advantage of going for this is that it's a fixed installation so lining up the boresight mounted heavy laser cannon should be easy at least. However you will probably need the massed energy mines of your ships fired on the base to do enough damage quickly enough to take it out, which means leaving the Shadow ships intact. You can also deploy virtually within heavy laser and energy mine range of the base, which means you can start on it on the first turn. Each heavy laser will do a low average of twenty points to the station, each energy mine thirty. Average damage on turn one

is three hundred and fifty, or over half the station. This is probably the easiest objective to achieve.

The third victory option is running. However you can't start to run till your down to two ships, and by that point it will be unlikely that you can survive another turns firing. The only saving grace is that these are not ancient shadow ships, so are not equipped with jump point disruptors. Guess the guys at mongoose wanted this to be a bit of a fairer fight than it was in the series.

The Fall of Night

Page 69

Victory all comes down to killing that Narn heavy cruiser, or getting it away through the jump gate.

Narn & Babylon 5

OK, the G'Toc is in pretty poor shape, missing both main weapons, so will not be able to do much but limp slowly and painfully towards the jump gate. The good news is that you have a recently up-gunned Babylon 5 station to pound away at the Centauri with, although it will be a slow process as the Secundus is a fairly tough ship and you don't have any super weapons to cut it in half with. Take it slow and steady, keep the G'Toc back for as long as you can and let the station take the strain. The question really becomes can you destroy the battlecruiser before it destroys the G'Toc?

Centauri

Your not coming home from this one, so don't worry about anything other than killing that Narn cruiser. Ignore Babylon 5, and target the G'Toc with every weapon you can get in range. Only fire on Babylon 5 with weapons that don't have

the G'Toc in arc. Other than that, close in on the Narn cruiser and start blasting.

You could sit at the jump gate outside Babylon 5's range and shoot up the Narn cruiser as it gets closer. The problem with this is that you may not be able to kill the G'Toc quickly enough once it gets within your limited range.

Severed Dreams

Page 70

This battle is about killing the enemy, it's that simple.

Babylon 5

If your mobile units engage Clark outside of the range of Babylon 5 weapons, you will be at a disadvantage. The Clarkist forces will be trying to split your forces in half so that they can defeat them in detail, don't let them.

The two wings of breaching pods only carry eight troops, against the forty troops on Babylon 5 this is not a major threat. They will cause some damage if they get onboard, but they still have to get past the anti-fighter trait of the station itself. Overall they are not a serious threat, and you shouldn't get distracted by them.

You have the initiative advantage however the two Hyperion cruisers will be the first things to move, denying you shots at the Omega destroyers until you've killed the Hyperions. Take the shots on the Hyperions that your given and see how well the old cruisers can take a six dice heavy laser cannon. Trouble is you will be taking hits from both Omega during this time and they are likely to concentrate fire as well, so you may loose one of the Omega while killing the Hyperions.

When firing, unless one of your ships is likely to pop any second, fire the station first as it will be able to engage all of the enemy ships that are in range, and will be burning out interceptors on them all before your other ships fire.

This is a rough fight, and victory here will take something special. It's only a shame you don't get the reinforcements that you know are on the way, three Sharlin war cruisers and a white star would make a serious difference.

Clarkist

Babylon 5 makes up a third of the rebel force, so if you can get the two destroyers away from it this will give you an advantage. However the rebels will know this and will avoid doing so.

Your main advantage is the pair of Hyperion cruisers, used as initiative sinks they will enable your Omega destroyers to target the rebel destroyers, which will give you a significant advantage. Concentrate on the Alexander first, it has the better crew quality and is also already damaged, which means it will die that much quicker. However don't be obsessive about this and hit either ship as and when you can.

Don't worry about the what you've seen on TV, this should be an easy win for the rightful president.

Interludes and Examinations

Page 72

While victory will be decided by victory points, this is not quite a stand up fight, as the Vorlons are the larger fleet and have the initiative on the first turn.

Vorlon Empire

You have a fifty percent advantage in fleet size and on the first turn you get to fire without response. You should use this to concentrate fire on two of the shadow ships, even if you don't kill them you should leave them in a pretty bad way. Your fighters can then close on them on turn two to finish them off while your ships work over the other two shadow ships.

You have more fighters but you will need to engage the shadow fighters two to one if possible. The shadow fighters have shields so you will need two anti-fighter this to kill them, or give you the advantage in the dogfight. You should engage the shadow fighters on the first turn if you can reach them. Then move on to finish off shadow ships on two onwards.

Shadows

This is not going to be pretty.

You have a two foot square to deploy in, and if you place ships at all four corners of the deployment zone then you will allow the Vorlons to concentrate on one or two ships, which will get them killed. If you clump all four ships together in close formation then he will be able to target all four of them with his entire fleet. This will mean he can work his way through all of his ships systematically using the fire to greatest effect. If you can get one or two ships out of his firing arcs you might keep some alive till turn two.

On turn two you'll have to take stock on how much damage you've taken. Shadow ships that are badly hurt should try and run for cover to regenerate, using your superior manoeuvrability. Any shadow ships that are in fighting trim should engage the enemy, destroyers first as they are weaker targets. However you were outnumbered to begin with and will have taken heavy casualties, so winning the fight here will be difficult if not completely impossible. A tactical withdrawal will reduce the level of Vorlon victory, but without killing a number of destroyers you'll not secure a victory.



Shadow Dancing

Page 73

This is a brutal and huge stand up fight, with two of the largest fleets seen in any scenario.

Army of Light

You will jump into battle on turn one, and as you start with Ivanova's scout on the table you can fire all your ships into the shadow fleet. You are outnumbered roughly four to three in this battle, but your Minbari ships are packing telepaths and you have a good number of beam weapons that may be able to stun the shadow ships. If possible target the telepaths against the two ancient shadow ships as they will be the most difficult to kill, and will do the most damage to your own fleet.

How you do will depend on how well you can coordinate twenty five ships. Where possible group ships together into squadrons to make managing them simpler. The smaller ships like the Drazi are best served hunting the shadow scouts, the Minbari Sharlin, Narn G'Quan and Brakiri Avioki have beams powerful enough to stun shadow ships, so they will need to get those beams to work. Whitestars can support vulnerable ships and hunt shadow ships that are trying to run to regenerate.

Shadow fleet

First don't split the two ancient shadow ships, they are your best ship killers and the biggest target for telepath or beam jamming, so as soon as a ship tries it on either of them, vaporise it with the other. The eight other shadow ships are on ship killing duty. They should work in pairs so that each ship is protected by a wingman. The scouts have two jobs, firstly busting stealth on the Minbari ships and secondly hunting down enemy fighters. Shadow fighters may be needed to keep enemy fighters off the shadow ships, but should go for whitestars where possible as they can out manoeuvre them and whittle the small ships down.

First targets are the three Sharlin war cruisers, they have the heaviest beams and are packing

telepaths in addition, although you will need your scouts to help break the stealth on them. Ignore the Avioki till turn three as they won't have their beams available on turn two. The Narn G'Quan is another worthwhile target as it also has a potent beam, although as a tough ship it will take serious firepower to destroy it. Once these ships are gone the rest of the fleet should fold easily.

Into the Fire

Page 74

The Vorlon empire base is an automatic system that will target three whitestars a turn, probably killing one or two of them. Those whitestars that survive being shot may be able to break away to self repair, however the crew loss means that they are still unlikely to survive a second hit, so it may not be worth doing. The scenario is pretty simple, just keep attacking the station, stay mobile so you don't lose your dodge trait, and remember that if out of range for the secondary weapon you can always close blast doors and use your main beam, which may reduce the damage if the dodge fails.

Between the Darkness and the Light

Page 75

Stand up fight on victory points, with the initial advantage going to the Psi Corp fleet due to an advantage in numbers.

Army of Light

Firstly you should take between fourteen and eighteen of the whitestars as whitestar IIs. This gives you a decent number of Nial fighters to counter the thunderbolts that the Shadow Omega destroyers carry. The remaining whitestars will provide you more than sufficient scouts for

this battle. Don't forget that while your main beam will not gain from scout redirection, your molecular pulsars will.

Bear in mind that your main beam outranges the weapons on the shadow omega other than his boresight beam, which means that if you are careful you will be able to fire on the enemy without him being able to return fire. Given that his interceptor grid will chop your molecular pulsar fire up anyway, this may be the best approach.

Although your dodge will preserve you from much of the secondary fire of the Shadow Omegas, you still want to avoid getting within range of them if you can avoid it. Depending on the size of the table however you may not have the room to run all the time.

Psi Corps

You have massive and powerful ships, however they are not the most manoeuvrable ships in space, and you are up against whitestars, which are, well almost.

Your main objective will be to get whitestars lined up to hit with your boresight molecular slicer beam as a solid hit that they don't manage to dodge should kill the target with one hit. On that basis you want the battle to degenerate into a furr ball as quickly as possible, as you will be more likely to have a ship able to target whichever whitestar moves first. Also with your fleet more widely spaced it will be more difficult for the whitestar fleet to keep out of your weapons range.

Your Thunderbolt fighters will be useful in attacking the whitestar fleet, however they will have to get past the Minbari Nial heavy fighters that will be along. Dogfighting them is possible but you will want to use numbers to even up the odds.

Border Dispute

Page 76

Unusual victory conditions as in the mock battle armour penetration, twin linked weapons and beams will be of no advantage, it just comes down to the number of attack dice. However both sides have the option of going to real combat at any time. The first side to loose a major ship to having to withdraw is likely to open fire for real, being unwilling to loose the powerful ship.

Brakiri

Your ships have all round firepower at a relatively decent range, so you will want to get in among the Drazi ships to take advantage of those multiple arcs. You have less ships, so avoiding the bore sight weapons of the warbirds will not be possible.

The falkosi fighters will be able to rack up a few points on a troublesome Drazi ship during the mock battle stage, as the Drazi ships will not be able to use their anti-fighter trait against them without taking the battle to a real level.

Drazi

You will want to use the Sunhawks to initiative sink the Brakiri ships so that your warbirds can get their bore sight weapons into play. The particle repeater is going to be the more valuable weapon during the mock battle due to the number of attack dice that it offers.

In the mock battle if you target the Halik first you are likely to provoke the battle escalating to a real shooting match, but if you take out one of the Ikorta cruisers first and make that leave the engagement before the real shooting starts, it will give you an advantage.

Hunting the Hunters

Page 77

An elite single ship against a pair of poorly crewed pirate vessels.

Whitestar

You have a single elite ship, so make the most of it. Remember that as a scout if you are not doing any other special actions you can get a re-roll on your molecular pulsars if you have moved into range to use them, which you might have to as you only have six turns of firing to destroy both ships. If you close then your best line of attack is to come from behind as the strike carrier has no aft fire and the battlewagon only has a weak particle array aft.

You will want to jump in on the first turn at a range where you can engage at least one of the raider ships, simply because of the time limit. Your improved neutron laser is best suited to firing on the battlewagon while the molecular pulsars are more appropriate to the strike carrier.

The fighters of these ships will be an issue, however if the raiders slow down enough to launch fighters, it may give you another turns firing at you. The strike carrier is the more likely ship to do this as it can get it's fighters launched in one turn. There is a solution to the fighter problem, which is to break away from the fight and do a 180, as the fighters haven't the speed to get behind you and if they pursue they will be in arc and range for the molecular pulsars, which should deal with them.

Raiders

First you want to deploy at the front edge of the deployment zone to get as close to the escape edge

as possible. The simplest solution is to hit the afterburners and Max chat your way across the table. On a normal seventy two inch table you have only sixty inches to cover, which means at Max chat you can be off the table on turn seven. This only leaves the whitestar six turns of firing at you, which wont be enough unless he closes into range to use the molecular pulsar.

Most of your weapons are only ten inches range, which is definitely less than that of the Whitestar. You do have the laser cannon on the battlewagon, however this is a bore sight weapon and so to use it you will have to turn away from the direct route to the exit. However due to the time limit the whitestar will have to come into range to use it's



molecular pulsars, which will give you a chance to use the pulse cannon on the strike carrier unless he comes from behind.

Your fighters may buy you time however launching them will prevent you using Max Chat to get away. The choice of whether to slow down and launch fighters or keep running will be difficult. If the Whitestar doesn't turn up on turn one you should use this time to get the fighters off the ships.

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Dark Secrets



A Call to Arms Battle Report Featuring the Narn and Psi Corps

Matthew Sprange and Ted Chang

The Gaim had their showing last month, so this time round we had to take the Psi Corps for a spin. Riding high on last month's success, Matthew walked into the office and proudly proclaimed he could take on all comers.

He didn't count on Ted Chang having recently come back from his travels, and one wet turbot in the face later, the battle lines were drawn.

This battle would take place in the depths of space in neutral territory, about one jump from Babylon 5. Earth telepaths has detected powerful psychic signals coming from a derelict Drakh ship hidden within an asteroid field. However, they discover the Narn have set up their own rescue mission, the Kha'Ri desperate to gain any advantage in the telepathic struggles between governments. Deciding the Narn cannot be permitted to succeed, the old guard from the former Psi Corps gather their darkest allies and prepare to do battle.

Dark Secrets is a 5 point War level fight, using the Rescue scenario. We decided that in order to claim the bonus Victory Points for getting close to the Drakh ship, no asteroid could be between the two ships.



The Psi Corps

Matthew: I decided this would be a late year fleet, so while the Psi Corps has officially been disbanded (after the trouble they caused during President Clark's reign of power), many of the higher ranking members were sequestered in covert black ops – this allows me to play with the Earth Alliance's latest warships, now with added Shadowtech!

The first ship on the list was a Nemesis. Though it swallowed up 2 FAPs, I just could not resist its Armageddon goodness. To back it up, I went with two Warlocks, freshly seconded from EarthForce. Operating together, these would form the centre of my fleet, and I was pretty sure they could annihilate pretty much anything in a single turn.

The Psi Corps

1. *EAS Venger* – Nemesis-class Advanced Destroyer
2. *EAS Sparta* – Warlock-class Advanced Destroyer
3. *EAS Thessalonica* – Warlock-class Advanced Destroyer
4. *EAS Dark Star* – Hunter-class Experimental Warship
5. *Paternis* – Mothership
6. *Ganges* – Fighter Carrier
7. *Amazon* – Fighter Carrier



Perusing the Psi Corps fleet list, I split a War point down into 2 Battle points, split one of those down into 2 Raid points, and then one of *those* into 2 Skirmish points. This allowed me a wide spread of Psi Corps ships, including a Hunter, Mothership, and 2 Fighter Carriers, allowing me to place the Black Omega Starfuries front and centre.

Looking at the battlefield, I decided the presence of the asteroid field would be pivotal. I positioned the Nemesis/Warlock team to avoid it, and they would concentrate on the Narn fleet, one ship at a time. However, all my fighters would fly straight to the asteroids in the first turn, just in case Ted decided to hammer them with energy mines – the fighter battle was one I intended to win, knocking out all the small Narn craft quickly so I could concentrate on the bigger stuff.

Trusting to the Mothership's stealth, I positioned it on the far right flank, where Narn firepower would probably be weakest (though I could see some energy mines coming its way too), while the Fighter Carriers would launch their remaining Black Omega Starfuries, then scuttle behind the asteroids where I hoped they would be left alone.

Finally, the Hunter was placed on the far left flank, where it could use the asteroids for cover if needed, but I was rather hoping it would prove adequate in stalling the entire Narn advance on that side of the field.

Bring it on, Ted!

The Narn Regime

Ted: So, time to take the Big M down a notch or two. After seeing Ian's battle with him last month, frankly, I wasn't impressed. As far as I was concerned, the Drakh ship was a bonus – Matthew's fleet was going down, that was all there was too it.

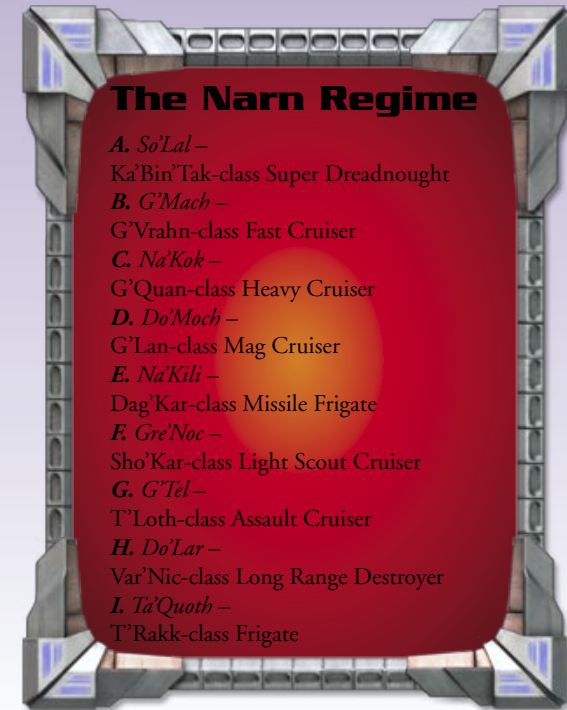
Knowing he wouldn't be able to resist the big guns (why else had he said this was a 5 point War level game, eh? Eh?), I felt it my duty to respond. The Ka'Bin'Tak went in first, quickly followed by a G'Quan and a G'Lan. Why not take a Bin'Tak as well as its bigger brother? Well, I wanted to have some iconic Narn ships on the table and, to be honest, if a Ka'Bin'Tak was going to prove insufficient what else was going to make the difference? Besides, I wanted to make sure I outnumbered Matthew, as quantity has a quality all of its own, as I always say.

The G'Vrahn was another strong choice, taking another War level point, leaving me with one. I split this down, taking 3 Raid choices, and 2 Skirmish (easy to work out with the table in the new Fleet Lists book). A Dag'Kar was picked up quickly, as I had visions of bathing Matthew's ships in energy mine fire, followed by a Var'Nic and a T'Loth, the latter being present primarily to soak up damage.

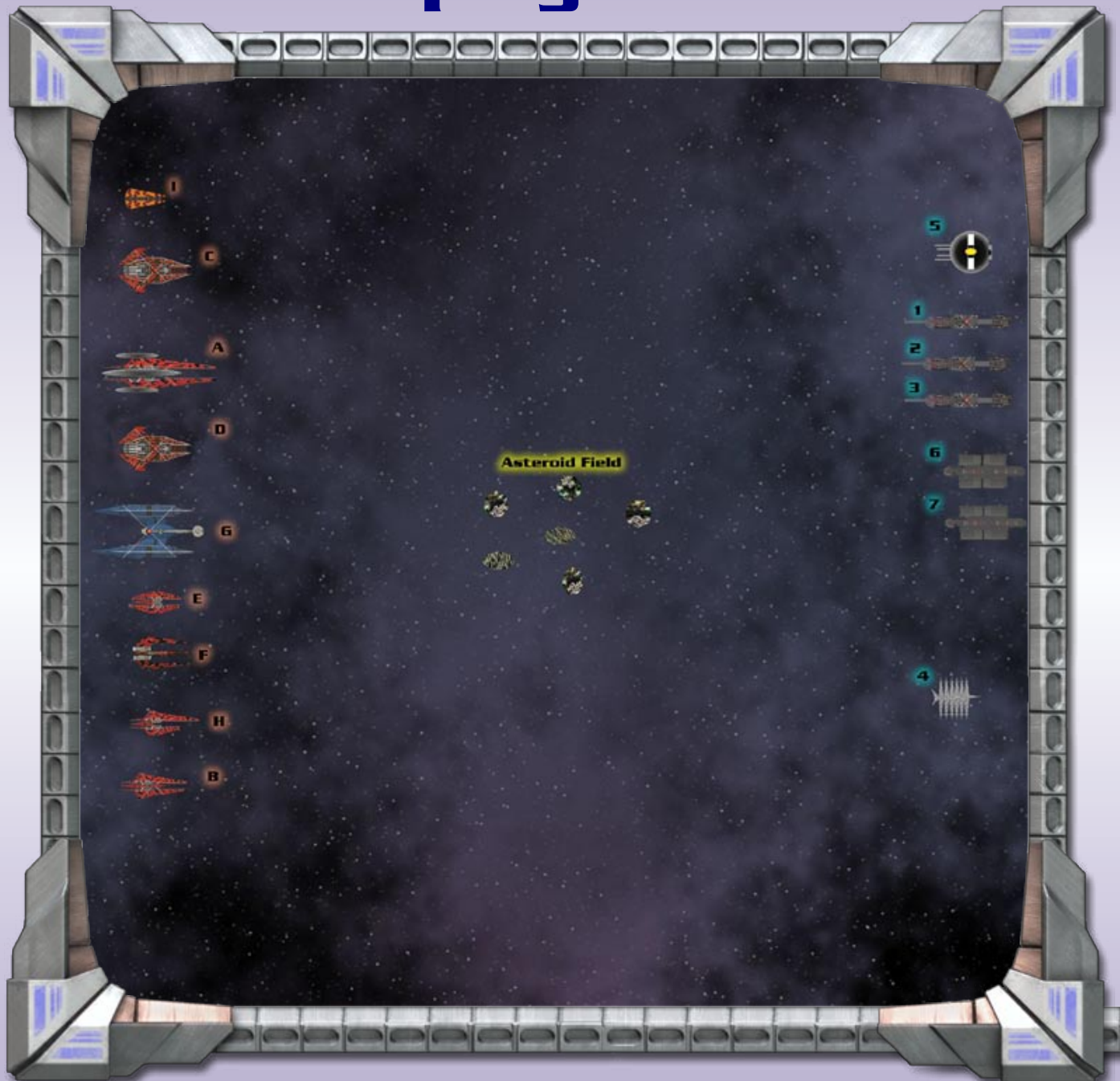
As a final touch, a T'Rakk went in, mostly because I like the model, and then, rather belatedly, I thought a Sho'Kar might come in handy against some of Matthew's stealthier ships. I also replaced the Frazi fighters on the Ka'Bin'Tak with Goriths, thinking a little dogfighting ability would not go amiss.

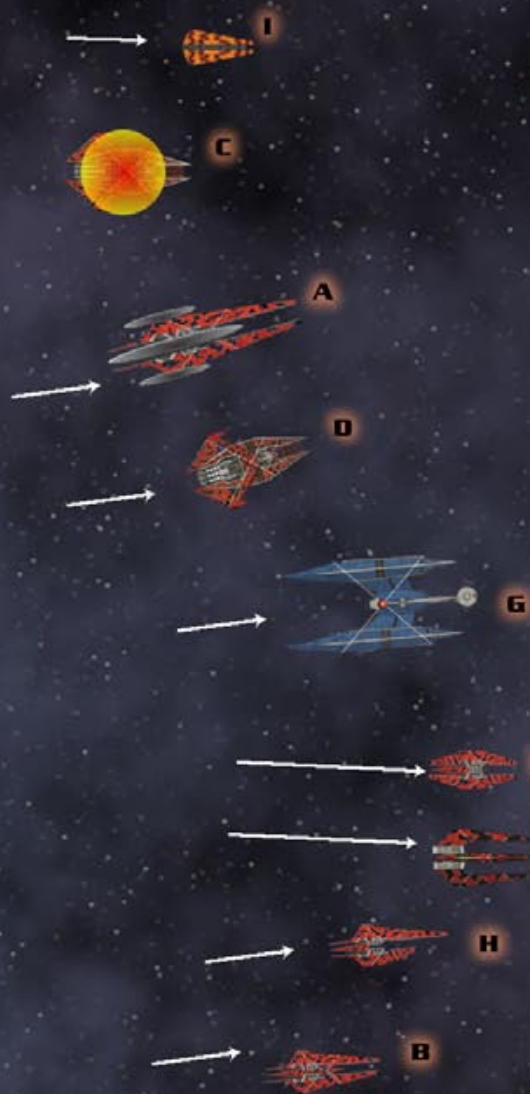
I lost the initiative roll for deployment (predictably), and set up in a strong battle line, with the big ships in the centre, but leaving enough room to get my energy mines off – unless Matthew hid all his fleet behind the asteroids like a coward.

To partially guard against that, I moved the T'Loth near the centre of the fleet, thinking it could sneak up behind the asteroids, and maybe surprise an Earth



Deployment





Turn One

The two fleets thundered towards one another, the Psi Corps trying to gain as much ground as possible, while the Narn held back a little, happy to take advantage of the range of their energy mines. The *EAS Dark Star* and *G'Mach* seemed ready to duel one another as they skirted the asteroid field, while the human's fighters clustered

together behind the spinning rocks as they prepared an ambush.

The first shot of the battle came not from a Narn energy mine but the molecular slicer beam of the *EAS Venger* as it targeted the *Na'Kok*. For a brief second, it looked as if the G'Quan-class cruiser would weather the blast, but first its engines were disabled, then a massive explosion rent the ship in two.

The Narn wanted revenge for this, and the mighty *So'Lal* targeted the *Venger* in return. Its mag gun was out of range but its laser pierced the hull of the *Nemesis*, starting many fires and

E slaughtering the crew. A complete malfunction in the *Venger's* interceptors allowed ion torpedoes to get through, and they caused minor damage to its **F** main reactor. Energy mines from the *So'Lal* and supporting *Na'Kili* hammered both Warlocks and the *Nemesis*, but they emerged from the nuclear fire intact.

On the other side of the battlefield, the *G'Mach* hunted down the *Dark Star*, penetrating its stealth. Thought the powerful mag gun proved ineffective, the reliable laser hit the *Dark Star's* reactor, completely disrupting the ship's ability to repair itself. More fire pours into the Earth ship, and energy mines blast both its hull and two flights of Black Omegas. Finally, the *Do'Lar* lends its weight to the assault, crippling the *Dark Star*. Its own weaponry out of range, the *Dark Star* has no answer for this assault.

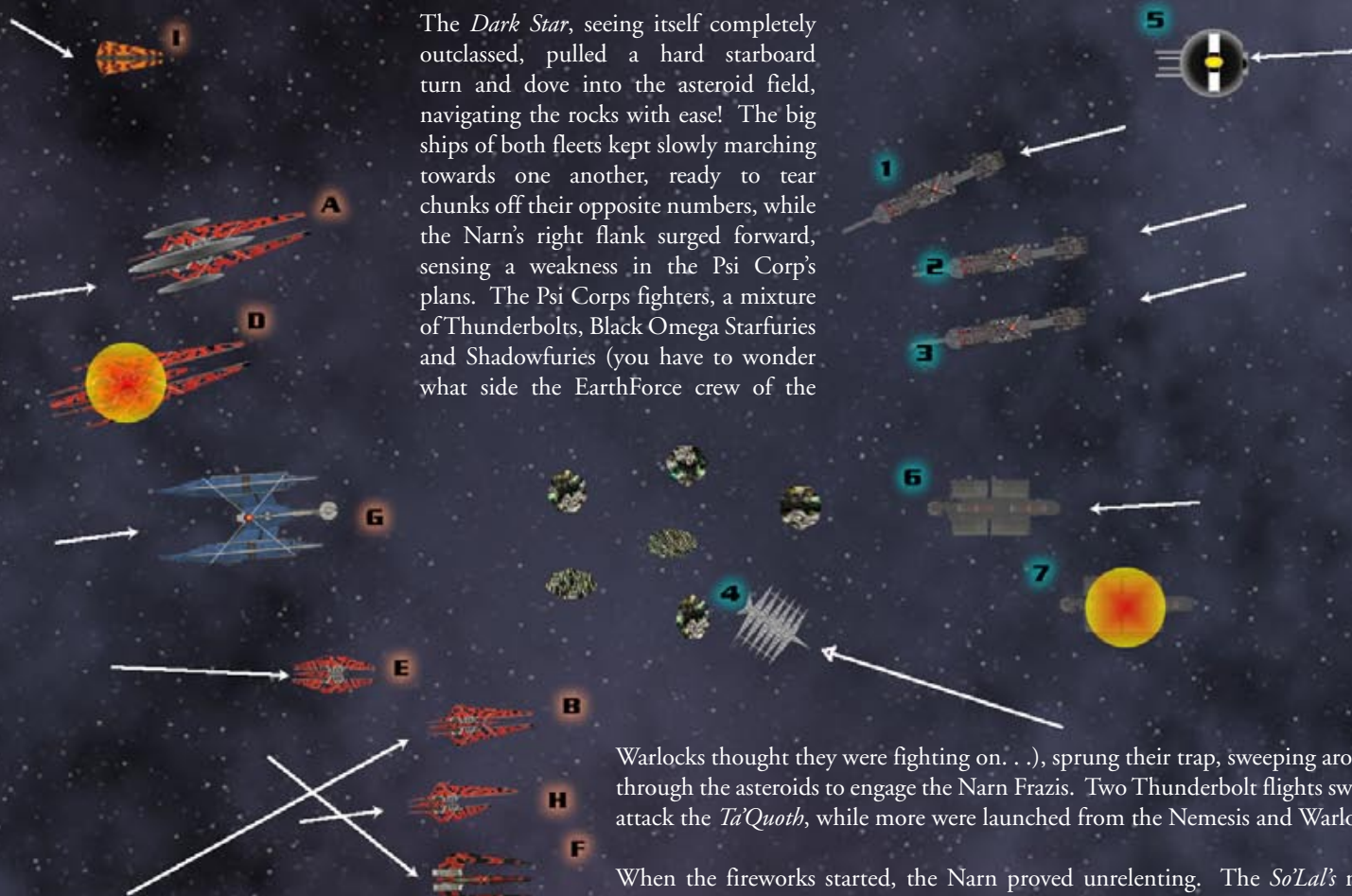


Both sides are hurting after this initial exchange, and the battle is only just starting. . .

Matthew: The first shot of the game claimed a Battle level G'Quan – I was very happy about that! My big guns (the *Nemesis* and Warlocks) were proving their worth already, and I was very confident about taking on Ted's heavy hitters. The crippled Hunter was more of a problem, as that made my whole left flank very weak, but I prepared to press on with the plan, hoping the *Venger* and its team would get the job done before I was smothered in Narn!

Turn Two

The *Dark Star*, seeing itself completely outclassed, pulled a hard starboard turn and dove into the asteroid field, navigating the rocks with ease! The big ships of both fleets kept slowly marching towards one another, ready to tear chunks off their opposite numbers, while the Narn's right flank surged forward, sensing a weakness in the Psi Corp's plans. The Psi Corps fighters, a mixture of Thunderbolts, Black Omega Starfuries and Shadowfuries (you have to wonder what side the EarthForce crew of the



Ted: The loss of the Na'Kok was unfortunate, but bearable. Matthew was eager to bring his ships into range where their secondary weapons would be effective – and right where my mag guns could be brought into play too! His flank was looking very weak, and I prepared to finish off that Hunter in the next turn, ignoring Matthew's jibes about how the *Nemesis* was already repairing the damage I had dealt it. Let's see your Hunter repair itself then!

Warlocks thought they were fighting on. . .), sprung their trap, sweeping around and through the asteroids to engage the Narn *Frazis*. Two Thunderbolt flights swept in to attack the *Ta'Quoth*, while more were launched from the *Nemesis* and Warlocks.

When the fireworks started, the Narn proved unrelenting. The *So'Lal's* mag gun ravaged the *Venger*, completely offlining its starboard weaponry, while its lasers started a number of secondary explosions which turns its personnel into a skeleton crew. Its interceptors worked over time with the other firepower raining down on its hull, keeping the ship in the fight.

In return, the *Venger* attacked the *Do'Moch*, hoping for a repeat of the damage it did to the sister ship. However, only moderate damage was scored by beam, rail gun and missiles, knocking out its jump engines. The *Do'Moch* hammered away at the *EAS Thesselonia*, knocking out its interceptors, but the *EAS Sparta* caused significant damage in return, completely destroying its engineering section. The stealthy Psi Corps Mothership then crept into range, finishing the mag cruiser off in a shower of debris.

The *Thesselonia* managed to draw a boresight shot on the *G'Tel* that had been lurking behind the asteroid field, but the Narn ship lived up to its reputation for just soaking damage up. After its firepower had been greatly reduced, crew wiped out, troops killed and engines damaged, it was still in the fight, ready to dish out some serious boarding action!

On the far side of the battlefield, the advancing *G'Mach* and *Do'Lar* had cleared the asteroids and brought one of the hiding Fighter Carriers into view. With a single volley from each ship, the Amazon erupted into flame. Close by, two Thunderbolt flights launched an attack on the *Tu'Quoth*, knocking out its port weaponry, and this success was repeated by human fighters across the board – the Narn lost every dogfight they had been pulled into, despite having weight of numbers in most.

Matthew: Well, this was. . . okay. What the report here does *not* tell you was that the *Venger* was beginning to be seriously hurt. Self-Repairing 2D6 is all well and good, but Ted was dishing out far more than that in each turn. If things continued like this, the *Nemesis* would be crippled next turn.

However, the Warlocks were still mostly intact (though smarting from a few energy mine strikes – they really do begin to wear you down after a while), and I had to have done at least some damage to that thrice-cursed *Ka'Bin'Tak*. The *T'Loth* proved its usual resilience as well, sustaining five critical hits without blinking!

Still, I was most definitely winning the fighter war – I figured one more turn to 'clean things up,' as they say, and then I could unleash my flights against Ted's ships, leaving him with nowhere to go.



Ted: After enduring the inevitable joke of Matthew holding a Warlock in front of my face and shouting 'This is SPARTA!' the turn started to go well for me. Between the *So'Lal* and *G'Tel*, Matthew was throwing the heaviest firepower he could deliver into my fleet, and these two ships were just soaking it up. I figured Matthew's ships should be beginning to crumble soon, but the *So'Lal* was still well into triple figures for Damage and Crew!

The destruction of one of Matthew's Fighter Carriers was a moral one rather than of vital tactical importance, as I knew he was trying to

keep a low profile with them. With his flank crumbling, I would soon be able to start hitting his Warlocks and *Nemesis* in the side – a shame I knocked out the starboard weaponry on the *Nemesis* rather than the port, but you can't have everything.

The fighters were a worry, and I began to suspect there was not a thing I could do about them. However, my ships still had lots of Damage remaining, so I figured they would be little more effective than gnats round an ox.

I do believe the battle is turning in my favour. . .

Turn Three

Navigating the asteroid field, the *Dark Star* came close to scraping a spinning rock, but managed to creep closer to the deadened Drakh ship. The *Ganges* followed it into the asteroids, while the *Paternis* turned to face the horde of Narn ships coming from the far flank.

In the centre, the *G'Tel* gunned its engines and flew forward, preparing its troops for assault. The *Venger* opened up first with its particle cannon on the *So'Lal*, knocking out its aft weaponry but otherwise leaving the super dreadnought fairly healthy. Ignoring this pinprick, the *So'Lal* lined up on *EAS Sparta* and detonated just about everything combustible on the Warlock, shattering it with a spectacular explosion! Spinning debris ploughed into the *Venger*, taking out its engineering section. The crew on board did not see the tiny energy mine hurtling towards them until it exploded – nuclear fire washed over the *Venger*, exterminating the last of those on board, leaving the mighty Nemesis a drifting hulk.

The crew of the *Dark Star* thought they had fared better when the *G'Tel* drifted across their sights, and they unleashed their molecular slicer beam only to see it fizzle and barely scratch the Narn vessel.

Now alone, the *EAS Thesselonia* split its fire between the *G'Tel* and *So'Lal*. A huge explosion on the *G'Tel* caused a reactor leak, killing dozens of Narn and hindering the deployment of troops. When the missiles and railguns reached their

and Shadowfuries caused a reactor implosion on the *Na'Kili*.

After the smoke had cleared from those salvos, the engineers on board the *So'Lal* reported they had had minor success in restoring full power to its engines.

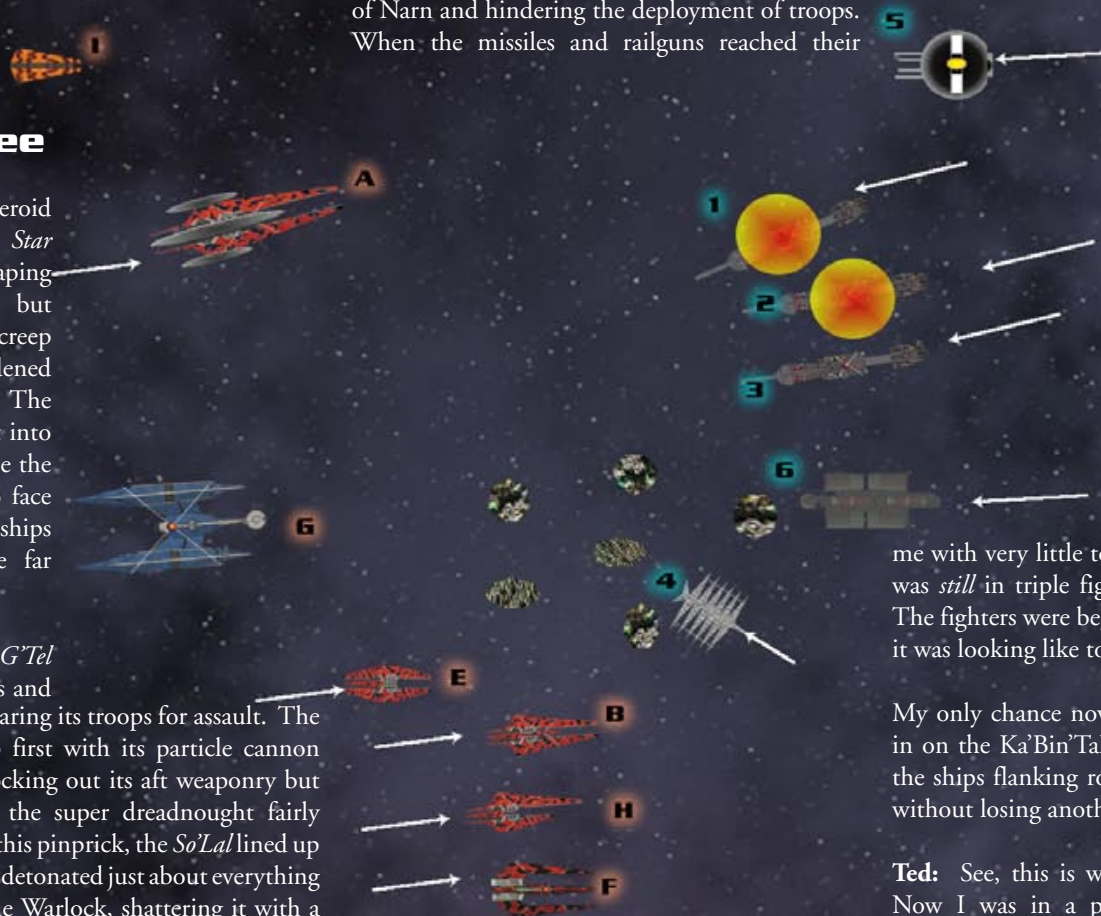
Matthew: Urk! That was *not* supposed to happen! I watched stunned as the entire centre of my fleet just vaporised before me. Two of my big hitters were gone in an instant, leaving

me with very little to hurt the Ka'Bin'Tak, which was *still* in triple figures for Damage and Crew. The fighters were beginning to have an effect, but it was looking like too little, too late.

My only chance now was to get some good hits in on the Ka'Bin'Tak and destroy at least one of the ships flanking round the asteroids, hopefully without losing another vessel.

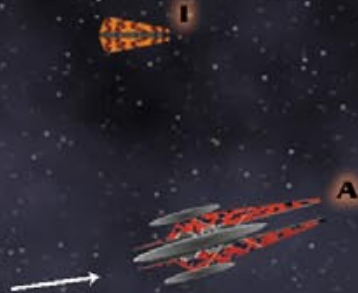
Ted: See, this is what they call textbook stuff. Now I was in a position to start hammering Matthew's fleet from two sides – and the loss of his Armageddon level ship just *had* to hurt. Many of my ships were beginning to suffer heavy damage, but they were still in the fight and far from being crippled.

Bring it on!



target, they left the *G'Tel* with its back all but broken and the crew reduced to skeleton numbers. A broadside attack with heavy pulse cannon on the *So'Lal* damaged its aft laser but otherwise had little effect.

A long-ranged shot from the *Paternis* struck the *Ta'Quoth*, damaging its engines, while Earth fighters swarmed all over the Narn fleet. Once again, droves of Narn fighters were destroyed by human pilots enjoying the turkey shoot, while a combined attack from Thunderbolts, Auroras



Turn Four

The Narn flanking force began its charge towards the *Paternis* now the *Dark Star* and *Ganges* had successfully evaded them. The *EAS Thesselonia* tried to swing round to bring its particle cannon to bear on the *So'Lal*, but the engines were just not up to such a vicious manoeuvre.

As Earth fighters started to close in on Narn ships, flights of Thunderbolts launching stand off attacks against the *So'Lal* with their missiles, the *Ganges* quietly closed in with the Drakh ship, claiming ownership.

Finally finding their hearts, the Narn fighter pilots began to strike back, destroying two Black Omega flights, but they face doom and gloom everywhere else. The Narn fighter force had effectively ceased to exist. Thunderbolts continued to pound the *Ta'Quoth*, and it started listing from the damage.

The *Paternis* focused its laser on the *Do'Lar*, causing moderate damage, but the energy spike it generated proved enough for the *So'Lal* to get a steady lock on the shifting sensor displays. Mag guns, lasers and torpedoes all ploughed in, devastating the *Paternis'* hull. Relaying targeting data to the rest of the fleet, the *So'Lal* allowed other

ships to target the Mothership too, with the *G'Vrahn* finally delivering the killing blow with its mag gun, causing a catastrophic explosion.

The *Thesselonia* managed to retain some honour as it pounded the *So'Lal* with heavy pulse cannon, causing an ammunition explosion, while raging fires would later hamper repairs.



Matthew: And now the Mothership was gone. I must admit, I had entrusted to its stealth, but once the Ka'Bin'Tak got its lock on, Ted could not fail to roll just the right number with his other ships. The one bright spot was that the Ka'Bin'Tak had been reduced to double figures on Damage (though not on Crew!). However, I decided there were limits to even this. Time to get out of here. . .

Ted: I really thought the Mothership would prove to be tougher than that, but in the end it is really just a big space liner with heavy weapons – stealth is its main protection, and once I broke it, there was no escape from the big guns.

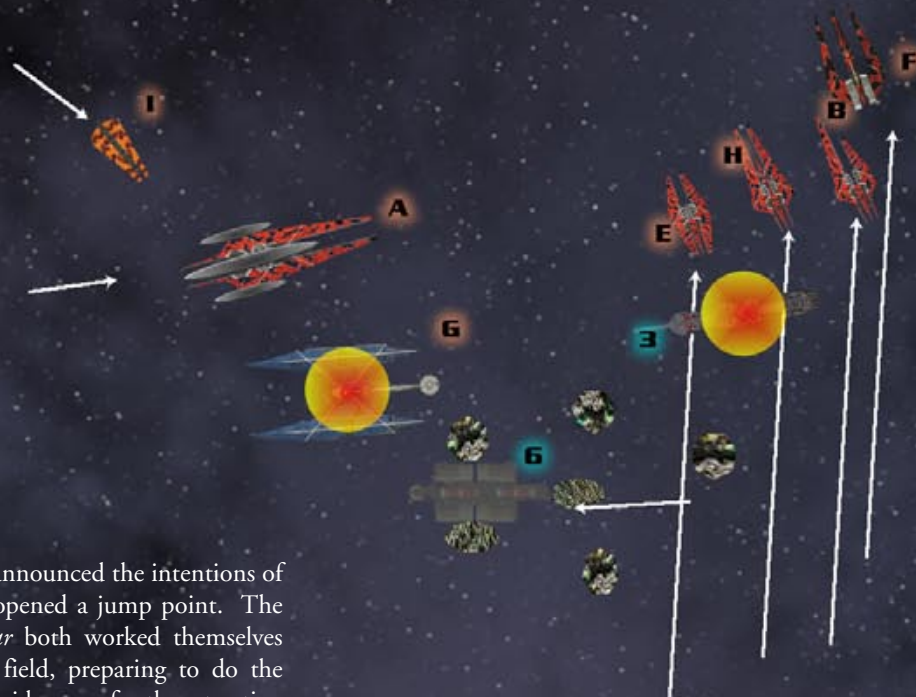
Some of my ships were looking distinctly ropery, especially the T'Rakk, but they were still in the game and I now vastly outnumbered Matthew.

Turn Five

The *EAS Thesselonia* announced the intentions of the whole fleet as it opened a jump point. The *Ganges* and *Dark Star* both worked themselves clear of the asteroid field, preparing to do the same. Ordered to provide cover for the retreating ships, the Earth fighters mobbed the *Na'Kili*, *So'Lal*, *Do'Lar* and *Ta'Quoth*.

The Narn tried to follow the quickly vanishing ships, having been caught out by this unexpected move. The *G'Mach* lined up on the *Thesselonia* as it sped towards the jump point, and a well-aimed mag gun blast speared it from stem to stern, causing a catastrophic chain of explosions that blew the Warlock apart.

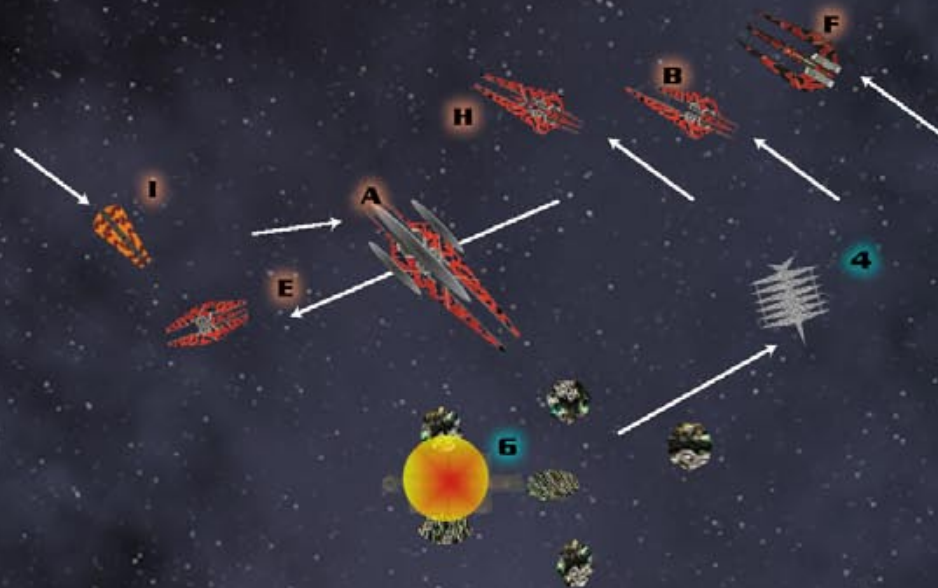
The *Dark Star* had managed to manoeuvre so that it was out of range or out of arc of any incoming fire, but the *Na'Kili* launched an energy mine into the edge of the asteroid field, shaking the teeth of the crew of the *Ganges*.



Another small victory for the Narn fighters took place, as the remaining Gorith flight destroyed another six Black Omegas, but the Earth fighters were now wholly concentrating on the Narn ships, breaking apart armour panels and sending them spinning into the void.

Matthew: I had long past the point where I had an answer to Ted's constant attacks, and now it was all down to saving as much dignity (and as many ships!) as I could.

Ted: I was now in mop up mode, though the *Dark Star* looked as though it could possibly get away. The fighters were an annoyance, but they had yet to cause serious damage.



Turn Six

The *Dark Star* and *Ganges* both opened jump points while the Narn fleet sped towards them. Only the *Gre'Noc* managed to make a tight turn to bring its weapons to bear on the *Dark Star*, while the rest of the fleet concentrated on the doomed *Ganges*.

All Thunderbolts were ordered to close in to the *So'Lal* and launch missiles. Tiny explosions ran up and down the dreadnought's hull and as the debris cleared, it was clear the mighty ship was finally dead in space, its engines completely overwhelmed and offline.

The *Gre'Noc* completely failed to get a good lock onto the *Dark Star*, but the *G'Mach* finished off the *Ganges* with an almost contemptuous blast of its mag gun.

Matthew: We called it quits here – the *Dark Star* had successfully opened a jump point and would escape in the next turn, while the fighters would simply scatter to the four winds and evade any the heavy, lumbering Narn. The one bright spot was that I had finally managed to bring the *Ka'Bin'Tak* down to double digits on its Damage score.

Frankly, if the Narn want some mouldy old Drakh that much, they are welcome to it!

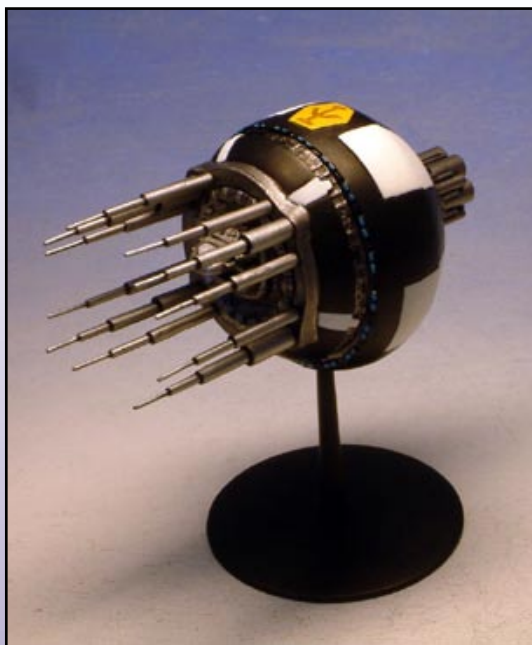
Ted: Victory is mine!

Shame about the Hunter though. . .

And All My Dreams. . .

Matthew: Looking back on this battle, it is funny to see how quickly things took a turn for the worse. In the first turn, when the G'Quan was destroyed by the first shot of the game, I really thought I had it in the bag. However, Ted hung in there, did not get distracted, and once he got in close enough to use his mag guns, it was over very quickly. Narn ships can absorb a tremendous amount of damage, and though I hit them again and again, they could just shrug off whatever was thrown at them.

There were plenty of criticals flying around in this battle (the Ka'Bin'Tak had eight on its sheet at the end, and had repaired two during the battle!), but Ted had all the 6-6's, and he got them at just the right time, every time. When coupled with Triple Damage weapons, even the largest ships are in trouble.



Help me mother...

Overall, I think my biggest mistake was one of approach. I went a bit dippy at the size of the battle, and loaded up on the big guns, almost to the exclusion of all else. I also treated the fleet as a souped up Earth Alliance, whereas the Psi Corps are a little more subtle than that.

Hanging out the Hunter to dry was a big mistake, as Ted was able to blast it at range, where it had no response – you have to be far sneakier with it! I also relied on the Mothership's Stealth way too much, and over-estimated the power of two Warlocks and a Nemesis when a Ka'Bin'Tak was nearby.

If I could fight the battle again (and you can be sure we will!), I think I would either completely ignore the Ka'Bin'Tak, or else concentrate every ship I had on it. Either work on the rest of the fleet, or remove the biggest thing in the Narn arsenal as quickly as possible. As it was, I had completely split the fleet up, allowing Ted to pick my ships apart, while mine did not succeed in concentrating their attacks properly.

The Regime Rises!

Ted: And another one bites the dust! I think Matthew is right when he talks about not focussing on targets properly. The two Warlocks and Nemesis in the centre, for example, were splitting their fire all over the place, rather than concentrating on the Ka'Bin'Tak (just why did he go after the T'Loth, it wasn't hurting anyone!). There is a desire, when fielding boresight weapons,

to use them at every opportunity, but if you play the initiative order in the right way, this means they can be forced to target less optimum targets, rather than throwing everything they have into just one.

The loss of the G'Quan early on had been a blow, but once we got into the swing of things, the resilience of Narn ships came to the fore. They are certainly born again hard!

That said, I didn't let on to Matthew just how much my fleet had suffered. The Ka'Bin'Tak had been reduced to 80 points of Damage, mainly because of the combined fighter attacks at the end, but take a look at the following remaining Damage;

Dag'Kar: 17

Var'Nic: 19

T'Rakk: 1

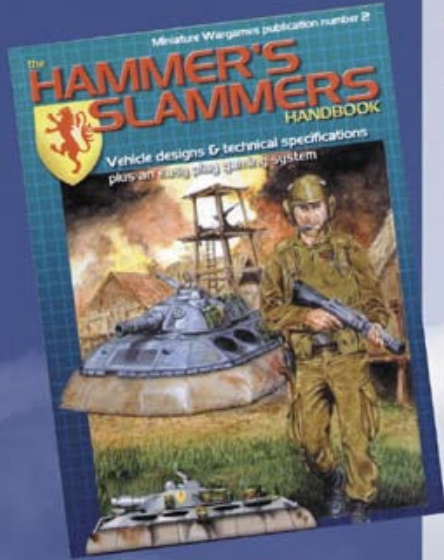
I didn't have the heart to tell him about the T'Rakk. . . However, it is plain to see that with a little more concentration of fire, I would have lost at least three more ships. Only the G'Vrahn and the Sho'Kar survived completely unscathed.

As for the Ship of the Match – I would have to say the G'Vrahn. Fast and tough, it has plenty of fighters, the speed and agility to get to where the action is, and a vicious long-ranged mag gun. I am not sure I would like to base a fleet around this vessel, but as a supporting act in a larger fight, I say it cannot be beaten.

Psi Corps: 11

Narn: 47

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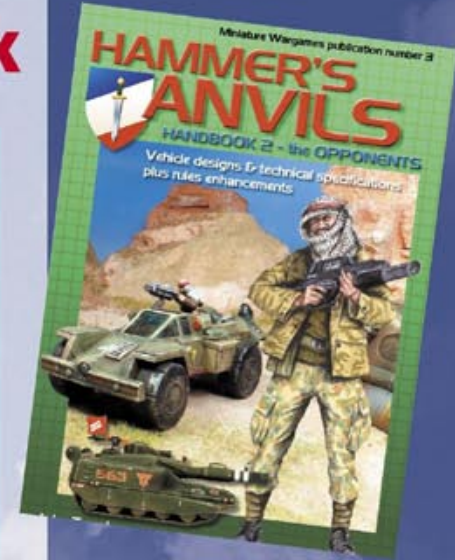
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SNIPER!



ONE SHOT, ONE KILL IN BATTLEFIELD EVOLUTION

Matthew Sprange

Snipers have seen a patchy history throughout modern warfare, ranging from reputations as elite marksmen to cowards who refuse to fight fair. Today, they enjoy a certain celebrity, noted for their wide range of survival skills and expert marksmanship that allow them to make the 'one shot, one kill'.

In Battlefield Evolution, the presence of a few good sniper teams cannot be overestimated. Highly accurate fire ensures they rarely miss their target and selection of the right enemy under the crosshairs can stall opposing units and throw carefully laid plans into chaos. Added to all this, with the right weapons (avoiding the large calibre and rather distinctive sounding M109), they can do all this with relative impunity. The only real way to deal with a sniper is to assault his position, which can produce a disproportionate amount of casualties for the sake of one man.

MEASNI		MEASNI		MEASNI		MEASNI	
		MEASNI		25			
		PROTOTYPE					
		Trained to operate alone, the MEASNI sniper is a skilled assassin, able to pick off enemies in relative safety.					
Material		<i>Sniper w/SVU</i>					
Options		None					
Statistics		Size	Move	Close Combat	Target	Armour	Kill
		1	5"	D6	4+	-	6+
		Support					
		Dragunov SVU Range: 36" Damage: D6					
		SVU: The SVU gains a +2 bonus to its Damage Dice, against Size 1 targets only. It may only fire once each turn and never as a reaction. If a Ready action is taken before it shoots, you may opt to roll its Damage Dice against any model in the Fire Zone, rather than allocate normally.					
		Stealthy: If a Sniper is within Cover, units beyond 20" may not draw Line of Sight to it.					
		Infiltrate: So long as your army sets up second and a Sniper starts the game out of Line of Sight to the enemy, it may be deployed up to 12" further away from the table edge.					
		Army List: Up to four Snipers may be purchased for each Support slot.					

		PLA SNIPER TEAM	30												
															
<p>Invisible and deadly, a well-positioned sniper team can create havoc for opposing infantry.</p>															
Material	Spotter w/ QBZ95, Sniper w/Type 88														
Options	None														
Statistics	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Size</th> <th>Move</th> <th>Close Combat</th> <th>Target</th> <th>Armour</th> <th>Kill</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>5"</td> <td>2xD6</td> <td>4+</td> <td>-</td> <td>6+</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Size	Move	Close Combat	Target	Armour	Kill	1	5"	2xD6	4+	-	6+		
Size	Move	Close Combat	Target	Armour	Kill										
1	5"	2xD6	4+	-	6+										
Support															
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>QBZ95 Assault Rifle Range: 20" Damage: D6</p> <p>Type 88 Sniper Rifle Range: 40" Damage: D6</p> </div>															
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Stealthy: If this unit is within Cover and did not make any shooting attacks with the QBZ95 in the last turn, units beyond 20" may not draw Line of Sight to it.</p> <p>Infiltrate: So long as your army sets up second and this unit starts the game out of Line of Sight to the enemy, it may be deployed up to 12" further away from the table edge.</p> <p>Type 88: The Type 88 gains a +2 bonus to its Damage Dice against all models of Size 1. If a Ready action is taken before it shoots, you may opt to roll its Damage Dice against any model in the Fire Zone, rather than allocate normally.</p> <p>Army List: Up to four Sniper Teams may be purchased for each Support slot.</p> </div>															

**USMC
SCOUT/SNIPIER TEAM**

50



The basic M-40A3 is used for precision sniping, while the distinctly un-stealthy M109 is capable of destroying even light vehicles.

Material

Rifleman w/ SCAR-L, Sniper w/ M-40A3

Options

Any Sniper may replace his M-40A3 with an M109 for no extra cost.

Statistics

Size	Move	Close Combat	Target	Armour	Kill
1	5"	2xD6	4+	6+	7+

Support

Weapons

FN SCAR-L Assault Rifle

Range: 24" Damage: D6

M-40A3 Sniper Rifle

Range: 50" Damage: D6

Barrett M109 Sniper Rifle

Range: 60" Damage: D6

Special Rules

Land Warrior: This equipment, through the use of computers and weapon-mounted cameras, allows a soldier to pinpoint shots and make a mockery of cover. Any model in cover targeted with the SCAR-L will only receive a +1 bonus to its Target and Kill scores. In addition, this unit has a command range of 12", rather than the normal 6". Models will also ignore the effects of smoke (see main rulebook).

Elite Training: All models in this unit gain a +2 bonus to their Armour rolls when in Cover.

Stealthy: If this unit is within Cover and did not make any shooting attacks with the M109 or SCAR-L in the last turn, units beyond 20" may not draw Line of Sight to it.

Infiltrate: So long as your army sets up second and this unit starts the game out of Line of Sight to the enemy, it may be deployed up to 12" further away from the table edge.

Intelligence Feeds: Any army with at least one of these units may re-roll its dice for set up and deployment.

M-40A3: The M-40A3 gains a +2 bonus to its Damage Dice, against Size 1 targets only. It may only fire once each turn and never as a reaction. If a Ready action is taken before it shoots, you may opt to roll its Damage Dice against any model in the Fire Zone, rather than allocate normally.

M109: Optional upgrade. The M109 gains a +3 bonus to its Damage Dice against all models of Size 2 or smaller. It may only fire once each turn and never as a reaction. If a Ready action is taken before it shoots, you may opt to roll its Damage Dice against any model in the Fire Zone, rather than allocate normally.

Army List: Up to three Scout/Sniper Teams may be purchased for each Support slot.

**BRITISH ARMY
SAS SNIPER TEAM**

50



The accuracy of the Regiment's snipers is renowned throughout the world, and a single team can stall the progress of an entire company.

Material

Spotter w/ L85A2, Sniper w/ LCR

Options

Any Sniper may replace his LCR with an M109 for no extra cost.

Statistics

Size	Move	Close Combat	Target	Armour	Kill
1	5"	2xD6	4+	6+	7+

Support

Weapons

L85A2 Assault Rifle

Range: 24" Damage: D6

LCR

Range: 50" Damage: D6

Barrett M109 Sniper Rifle

Range: 60" Damage: D6

Special Rules

FIST: Future Infantry Soldier Technology, through the use of computers and weapon-mounted cameras, allows a soldier to pinpoint shots and make a mockery of cover. Any model in cover targeted with the L85A2 will only receive a +1 bonus to its Target and Kill scores. In addition, all models in this unit have a command range of 12", rather than the usual 6". Models will also ignore the effects of smoke (see main rulebook).

Elite Training: All models in this unit gain a +2 bonus to their Armour rolls when in Cover. They may also re-roll their Close Combat dice.

Stealthy: If this unit is within Cover and did not make any shooting attacks with an L85A2 in the last turn, units beyond 20" may not draw Line of Sight to it.

Ambush: This unit may be concealed in an area of terrain outside of the enemy's deployment zone before the game begins. Write down the location of the unit before any models are deployed. You can reveal the unit at any time by placing the models on the table.

LCR: The LCR gains a +2 bonus to its Damage Dice, against Size 1 targets only. It may only fire once each turn and never as a reaction. If a Ready action is taken before it shoots, you may opt to roll its Damage Dice against any model in the Fire Zone, rather than allocate normally.

M109: Optional upgrade. The M109 gains a +3 bonus to its Damage Dice against all models of Size 2 or smaller. It may only fire once each turn and never as a reaction. If a Ready action is taken before it shoots, you may opt to roll its Damage Dice against any model in the Fire Zone, rather than allocate normally.

Army List: Up to three SAS Sniper Teams may be purchased for each Support slot.

Countersniping

Snipers are not just taught how to take best advantage of cover and pick off the enemy one by one. On the modern battlefield, they must also learn the art of countersniping – locating enemy snipers and neutralising them before they can do the same. With no opposing snipers, your own teams will have a free range over the battlefield.

These rules only apply to specific snipers and sniper teams, such as the PLA Sniper Team, SAS Sniper Team, MEA Snipers and the USMC Scout/Sniper Team. They do not apply to troops within squads who are armed with sniper rifles, such as the SAS section – these are considered to be supporting their squad in a designated marksman role, rather than acting as fully-fledged snipers.

To engage in countersniping, a sniper or team must take two Ready actions. In the next turn, they may freely shoot at any unit that is taking advantage of the Stealthy special rule *if* that unit made a fire action in its last turn. The sniper or team may make this attack even if the enemy unit used a weapon that normally allows it to remain out of Line of Sight, such as the M-40A3, SVU or Type 88.

Sniper Tactics

If you are lucky enough to be fighting an enemy on foot who has forgotten to bring his own snipers to the battlefield, you will have a chance to reign supreme. Position your sniper teams in dense terrain far from the enemy, that nonetheless provides a good view of wide open areas of the battlefield. Your opponent will be forced to skulk in the shadows, taking the long way round to any important objectives – even if your snipers never take a shot, they may win the game for you if they delay his infantry.

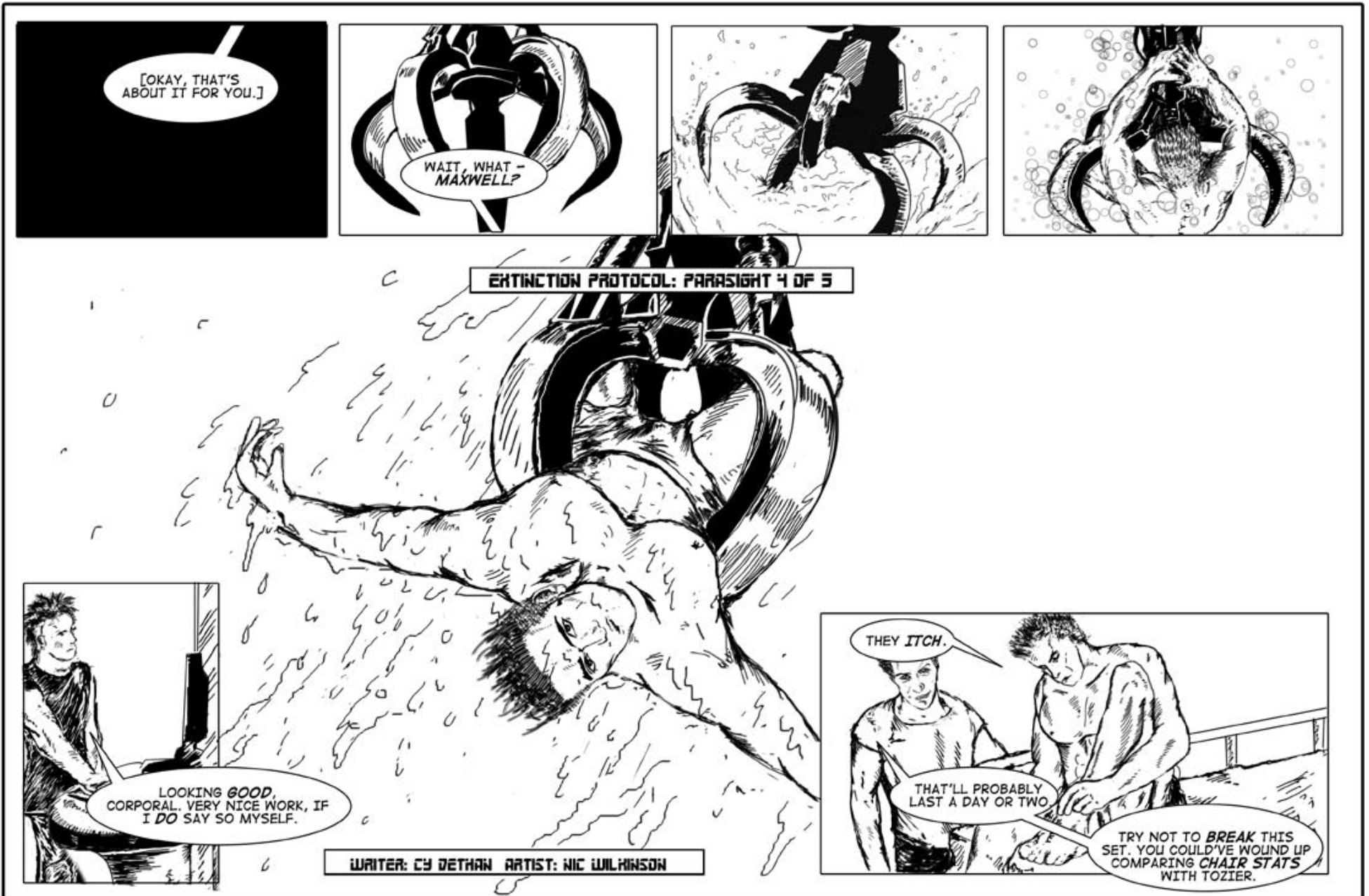
If he decides to take his chances by dashing in front of your sights, well, help yourself!

It gets a lot more interesting if your opponent has his own sniper teams and countersniping is brought into play. You may find your snipers are quiet for the first part of the battle, as they wait for their opposite numbers to blink first or be tempted by a high value target. Once you have spotted an enemy sniper, silence him as quickly as you can!

You will find that in these situations that snipers are almost fighting their own private war on the battlefield. Whoever wins that fight will be free to bring devastating support fire to aid the main army. With tanks duelling tanks and aircraft dancing around one another and any AAA fire, snipers become one of several battles taking place within the larger fight. Victory will lie in the hands of the general who can win the majority of these battles in the shortest possible time!

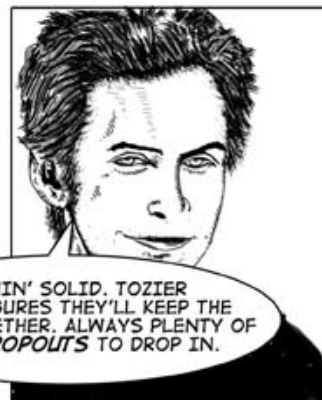


Extinction Protocol

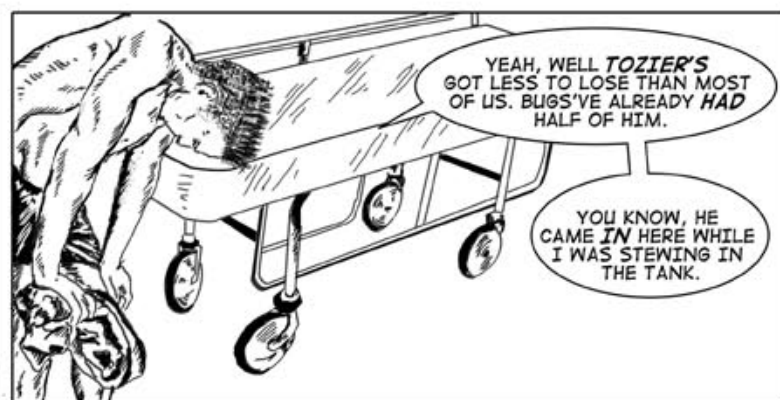




ANY WORD ON NEW ASSIGNMENTS YET?



NOTHIN' SOLID. TOZIER STILL FIGURES THEY'LL KEEP THE SQUAD TOGETHER. ALWAYS PLENTY OF NEW DROPOLITS TO DROP IN.



YEAH, WELL TOZIER'S GOT LESS TO LOSE THAN MOST OF US. BUGS'VE ALREADY HAD HALF OF HIM.

YOU KNOW, HE CAME IN HERE WHILE I WAS STEWING IN THE TANK.



SERIOUSLY? YOU'RE SAYING YOU TALKED TO HIM?

YUP.

MAN, TOZIER DOESN'T TALK TO ANYBODY.

THAT'S WHAT I'M SAYING.



WELL, WHAT DID HE SAY?

DAMNED IF I KNOW. HE WAS EITHER THREATENING ME OR CONGRATULATING ME.

JUST CHECKING ME OUT, MAYBE - TRYING TO DECIDE WHAT TO MAKE OF ME.



ANYWAY, I'VE GOT ABOUT A WEEK'S WORTH OF SOLID FOOD TO CATCH UP ON, SO I'LL WORRY ABOUT THAT LATER.

OH, AND MAXWELL--

--THANKS.





BLACKWELL
HERE.

<CORPORAL BLACKWELL,
REPORT TO SECURE
MEDICAL BAY 17.>

WHAT'S THE
PROBLEM?

<JUST GET
HERE, CORPORAL.>

ON MY WAY.

GREAT.

THIS JUST
KEEPS GETTING BETTER
AND BETTER.

CORPORAL BLACKWELL?

I WAS TOLD
I WAS NEEDED. WHAT'S
THE PROBLEM?

HE'S BEEN
ASKING FOR YOU.

DAMN IT.

DAMN IT,
DAMN IT,
DAMN IT

WHAT THE HELL?



HE'S BEEN ASKING--

--WHY?

I'M AFRAID YOU'LL HAVE TO ASK HIM THAT *YOURSELF*, CORPORAL. I JUST *WORK* HERE.

HIS SUIT WAS ON MINIMAL LIFE SUPPORT WHEN HE WAS BROUGHT IN.



SEE, HERE'S THE INTERESTING THING. HIS SUIT WASN'T THE ONLY THING ON PILOT LIGHT. HE PRETTY MUCH POWERED DOWN HIS WHOLE SYSTEM.

I CAN'T FOR THE LIFE OF ME FIGURE HOW HE *SURVIVED* DOWN THERE SO LONG.

YOU MEAN, LIKE HIS BRAIN?



I'M TALKING HEART RATE, AUTONOMIC FUNCTIONS, THE WHOLE DAMN *SHOW*.

WE DAMN NEAR WROTE HIM UP AS *D.O.A.* IT WASN'T UNTIL WE CUT HIM OUT OF HIS SUIT THAT HE STARTED TO COME BACK *ONLINE*.



ENSIGN, COULD YOU ESCORT THE CORPORAL DOWN TO BAY 17 AND RUN HIM THROUGH THE *PROCEDURES*?

YOU GOT IT, DOC.



PHYSICAL *PROCEDURES*?

NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT, CORPORAL. JUST *S.O.P.* WHEN ONE OF INTEL'S PREMIUM TELEPATHS BURNS OUT. INTEL'LL PICK HIM UP EVENTUALLY.



DO NOT TOUCH THE PATIENT. DO NOT *HAND* HIM ANYTHING OR *ACCEPT* ANYTHING FROM HIM. IF HE BECOMES *AGITATED*, HIT THE PANIC BUTTON AND WAIT FOR *ASSISTANCE*.



IN THE EVENT OF A *HOSTAGE SITUATION*, THE JASPER MASKELYNE WILL NOT *NEGOTIATE* FOR YOUR RELEASE.

DEAD OR ALIVE, THE SPECIAL OFFICER IS MORE VALUABLE THAN *YOU* ARE.



YOU GIVE THAT SPEECH A LOT?

NOPE. ACTUALLY, THIS IS A *FIRST* FOR US.

SICON'S CALLING THIS CLOWN A *GRADE 8 SECURITY EVENT*. THAT'S TWO STEPS DOWN FROM A MISPLACED *NUKE*.



BAY 17, ONE GOING IN.

HE'S BEEN PREPPED.



HEY, COME ON. I JUST GOT OUT OF THE *TANKS*.

RELAX, CORPORAL. IT'S JUST ONE MORE PROCEDURE WE NEVER KNEW *EXISTED* BEFORE YOU BROUGHT THE THING I N THAT CELL ON ON-BOARD



IF HE'S *VALUABLE*, WHY'S HE STILL *HERE*?

GET THIS; THEY DON'T TRUST FLEET TO *DELIVER* HIM. WHOEVER THE *SPECIAL OFFICER* IS BACK IN REAL LIFE, HE'S CONSIDERED *SERIOUS BUG BAIT*.



OKAY, YOU'RE *CLEAN*.

WHAT'S A "*SPECIAL OFFICER*" ANYWAY? IS THAT EVEN A *REAL RANK*?

NO IDEA. WE WERE TOLD TO DIG UP *SURVIVORS*. ALL WE FOUND WAS *HIM*.



WACKY STUFF.

THE ROOM'S *E.M. DAMPENED*, SO I WOULDN'T WORRY TOO MUCH ABOUT HIS... *YOU KNOW*.

I HEARD YOU LOST PEOPLE BRINGING HIM HOME, CORPORAL. THAT'S A *DAMN SHAME*.



SHAME, ENSIGN, IS PRETTY MUCH ALL THAT'S LEFT OF THE *SILVERBACKS* NOW.

I'M READY.

PACIFIC STORM

A Victory at Sea Battle Report

Chris Longhurst and Nick Robinson

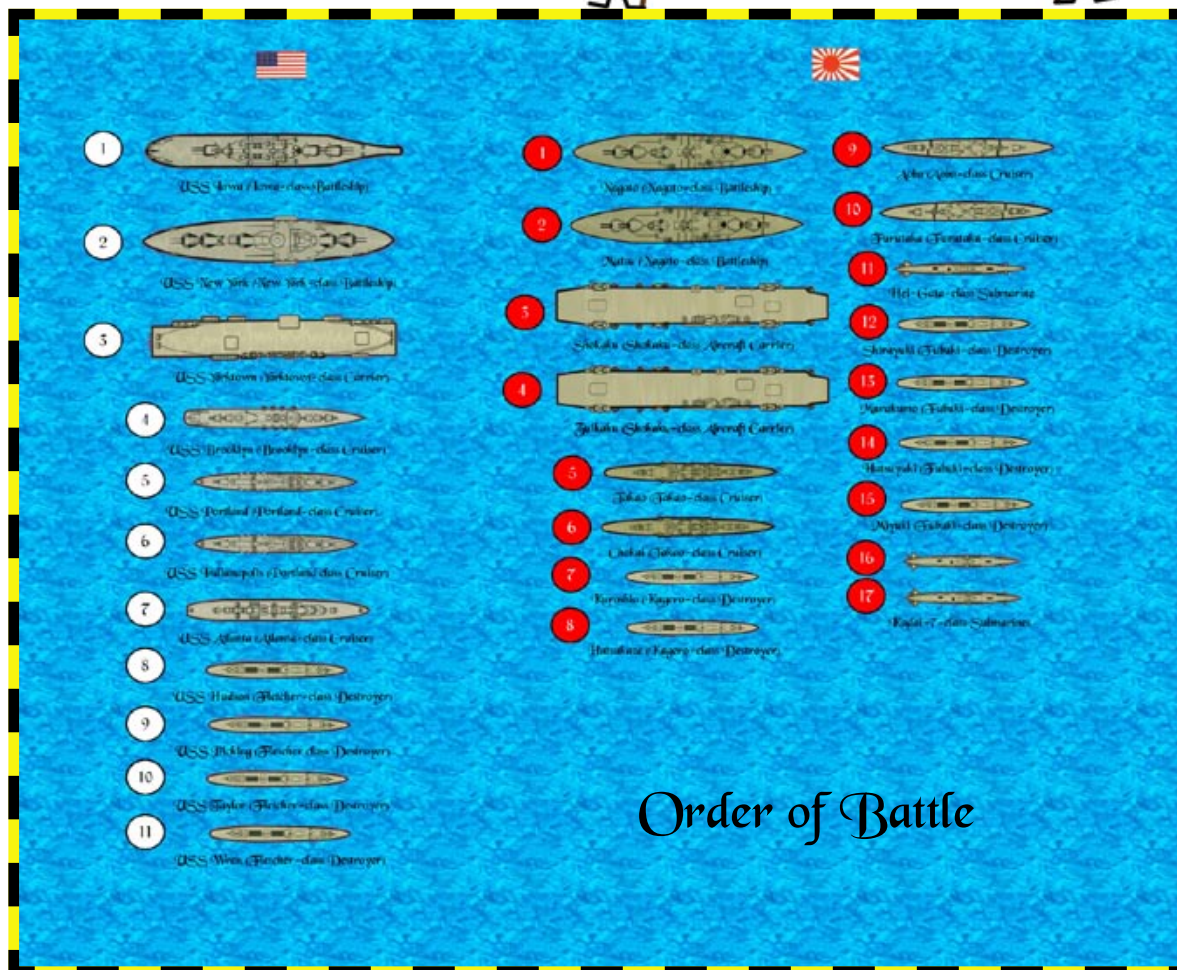
Choosing the fleet



I intended to base my task force around an *Iowa* class battleship, with all other ships supporting this major unit.

A second, much less capable, battleship in the *USS New York* and four cruisers would be the backbone of my fleet, whilst four *Fletcher* class destroyers would have the almost impossible task of holding off their opposite numbers in the Japanese fleet. The *USS Yorktown* would provide air cover for the task force, holding off the Zeros and Vals, whilst hoping to launch attacks upon the pesky Japanese destroyers.

I had not broken the fleet down in the most efficient manner, I was trying to see if I could beat Chris (a relatively inexperienced Admiral) without having to maximise my fleet's potential (and besides when I want bragging rights I REALLY want the bragging rights...).



Order of Battle

Deployment

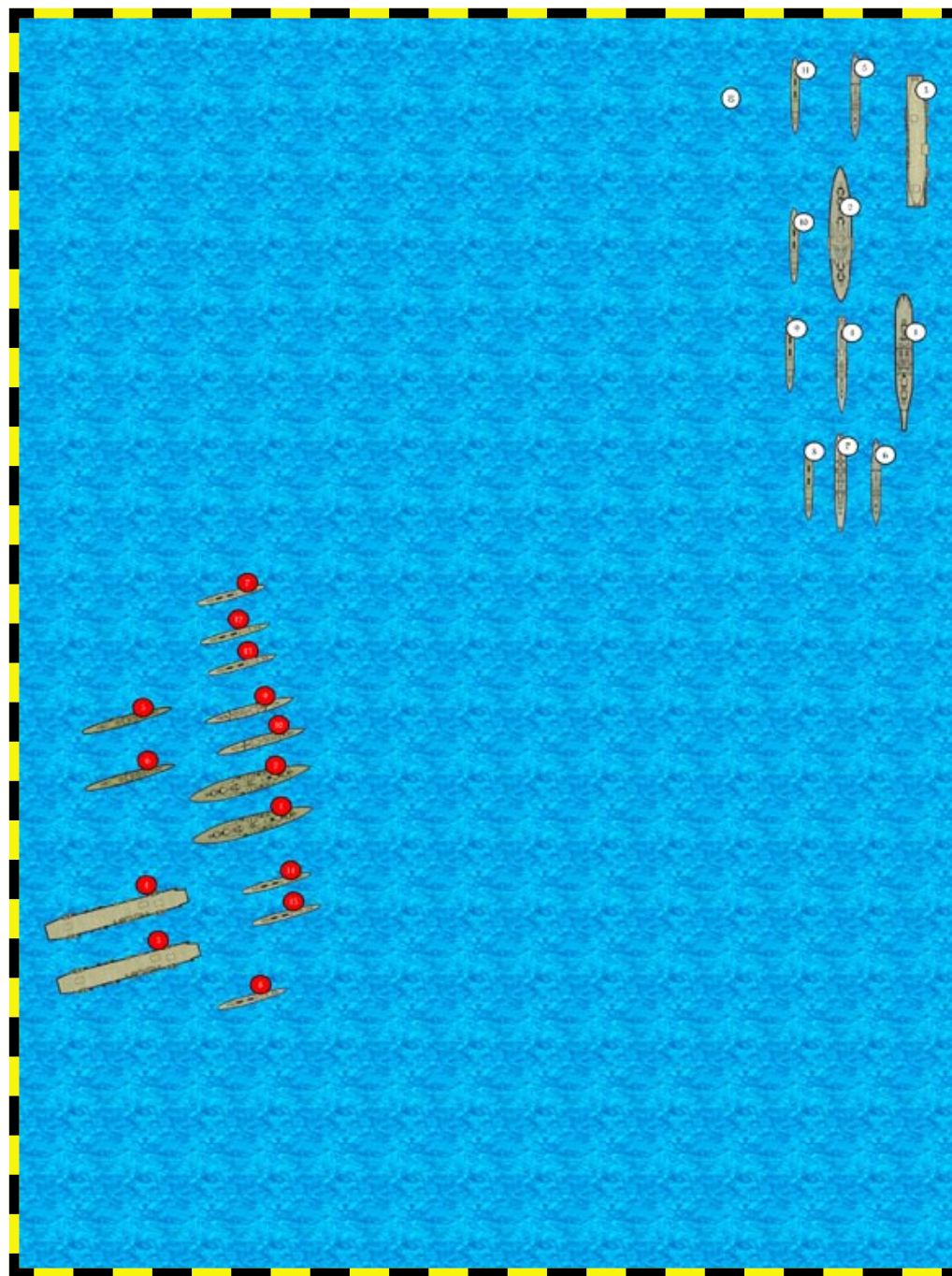


To call me ‘relatively inexperienced’ is something of an exaggeration. Before this game I had, in fact, never played Victory at Sea – or, for that matter,

any naval wargame – before. I’d had some experience getting soundly thrashed at A Call to Arms at the local wargaming club, but that was it.

So, I went for a suitably simple battle plan. After being told that a six-point Battle fleet consisting entirely of aircraft was not suitable for a battle report, I went for a different simple plan: use the superior range and the torpedo-heavy cruisers and destroyers of the Japanese fleet to lay waste to the US ships. I dubbed this plan ‘Operation Broadside Torpedo Death’. I would need lots of ships, so the first thing I did was split up the Fleet Allocation Points as efficiently as I could. Then I filled the ‘slots’ with ships I liked the look of. I avoided the huge *Yamato*-class ships because they didn’t contribute any torpedoes to the plan and because I wanted more points to buy cruisers with. I did take a pair of slightly smaller battleships just to give me some hitting power, though. I took two carriers because I wanted complete air superiority and I had a Raid point going spare.

I also took three submarines – two *Kadai* and a *Hei-Gata*. Pay attention to these, because you’ll be seeing them later.



Turn 1



I moved my fleet straight ahead in the hope I could get some extra firing in before the Long Lance torpedoes made their appearance.

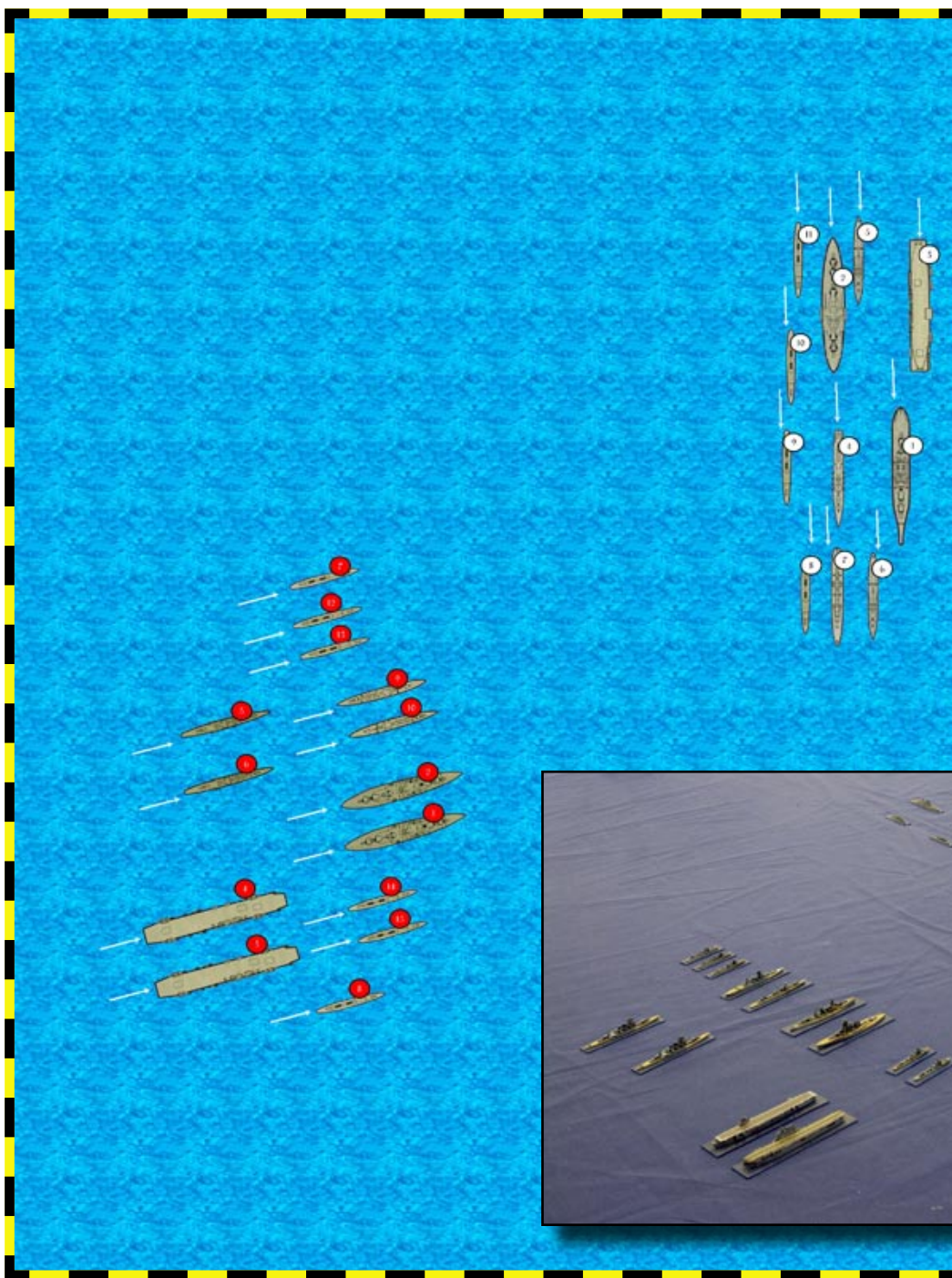
Upon firing minimal damage was inflicted upon the lead Japanese battleship and one of the cruisers. The *Brooklyn* also suffered a hit, but the damage was fairly minimal.



Banzai! Everything thundered forward at full speed except the battleships, whose batteries were so long-ranged they didn't need to, and the carriers, who needed to move somewhat more sedately to put *even more* planes into the air. (When playing the Victory at Sea scenario you get to start with half your carrier-based squadrons aloft, so I did. And it was a lot of squadrons.)

There was some half-hearted shooting from my side of the table, mostly thwarted by the accidental use of shells made of soggy tissue paper.

This turn was also the turn that I learned that spotter planes actually move more slowly than the ships that launch them (if said ships are using Flank Speed! at any rate). My plan to use them to tie up Nick's fighters had to go out the window, but I had so many Zeroes (eight flights compared to his three flights of Wildcats) it wasn't a problem.



Turn 2



Now things were getting interesting, as the Emperor's navy came within torpedo strike range. My destroyer screen, with the *Atlanta* in support, now turned at speed directly towards the Japanese vessels, hopefully reducing the impact of the torpedo volley that was sure to follow and increasing the likelihood of delivering their own salvoes. The rest of my flight continued straight ahead, hoping to pummel the Japanese ships with their big guns.

Meanwhile my fighters engaged the closest enemy zeroes, whilst I sent my torpedo and divebombers off to chase down Chris's destroyers.

The *New York* managed to sink the cruiser *Furutaka*, whilst in return the torpedo bombers of Chris's fleet sank the lead *Fletcher*-class destroyer (the *Hudson*), and crippled the *Atlanta* (with two of the torpedo bomber flights taken out). Minor damage was caused on both sides, with the *Iowa* still untouched, however an awful lot of torpedoes were now winging their merry way into my cruisers and destroyers, I now had to get in amongst the Japanese fleet and launch a counter strike before I lost my screening forces.

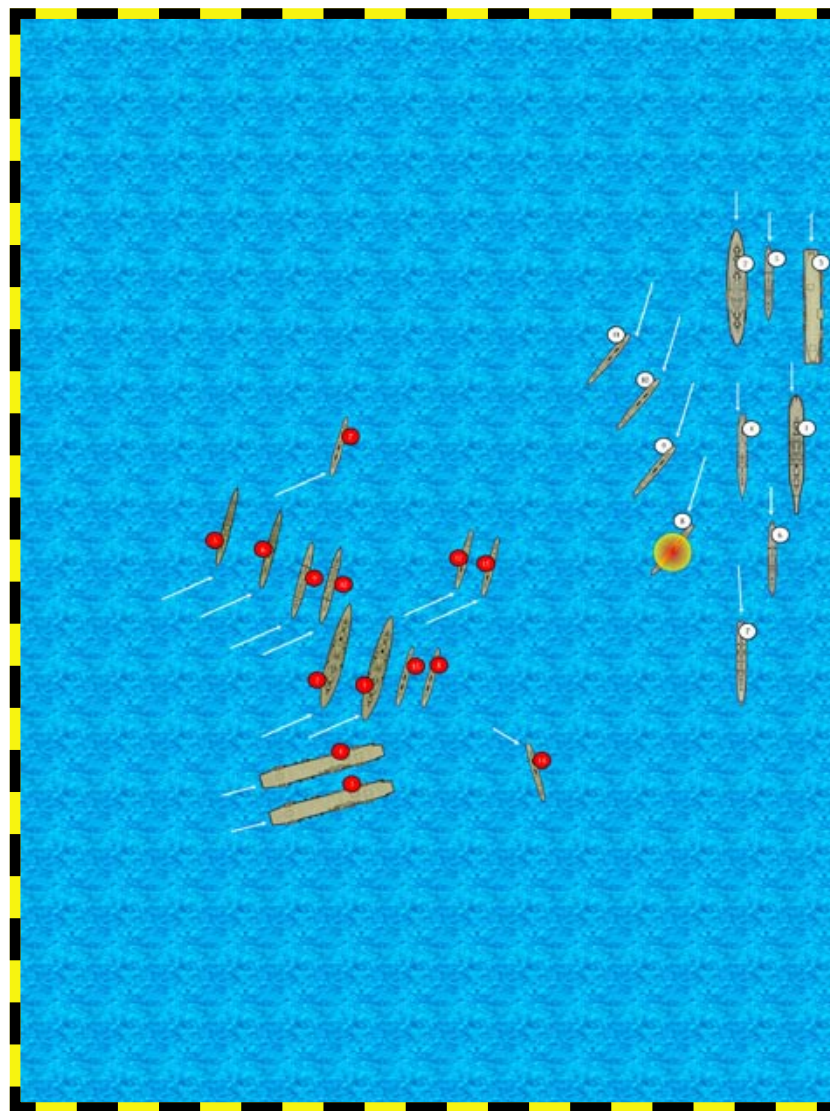


It was about this time that I actually looked up the statistics for the *Iowa*-class battleship and changed my plan. I had next to nothing that would touch it, so the new plan would be to leave it well alone and sink everything else. Hopefully that would be enough to win on victory points.

Shooting was rather more successful – my lead destroyers liberally seeded the US battle line with long lance torpedoes, and I managed to actually score some hits with shelling. The *Furutaka* went down, but I chalked it up under 'acceptable losses' and stuck to the plan.

Above the battle aeroplanes dogfought all over the place. I tied up Nick's bombers with my own

bombers in pointless dogfights because I had *so many* that it didn't matter. The Zeroes cheerfully shot down nearly everything in sight, with a single loss in the furball over the main carrier clash, while my first wave of torpedo bombers neatly blew up a bunch of stuff. Everything was going well, although the accursed *Brooklyn* was surviving much more firepower than it had any right to.



Turn 3



The turn the torpedoes struck. Thanks to the Long Lance torpedoes my battleline is utterly devastated. I lose the *Portland* and *Indianapolis*, plus two of my remaining destroyers. In return I manage to sink two destroyers (one by using my torpedo bombers from the

Yorktown - still happily disgorging divebombers for Chris to shoot down...), and inflict a bunch of damage to assorted enemy vessels.

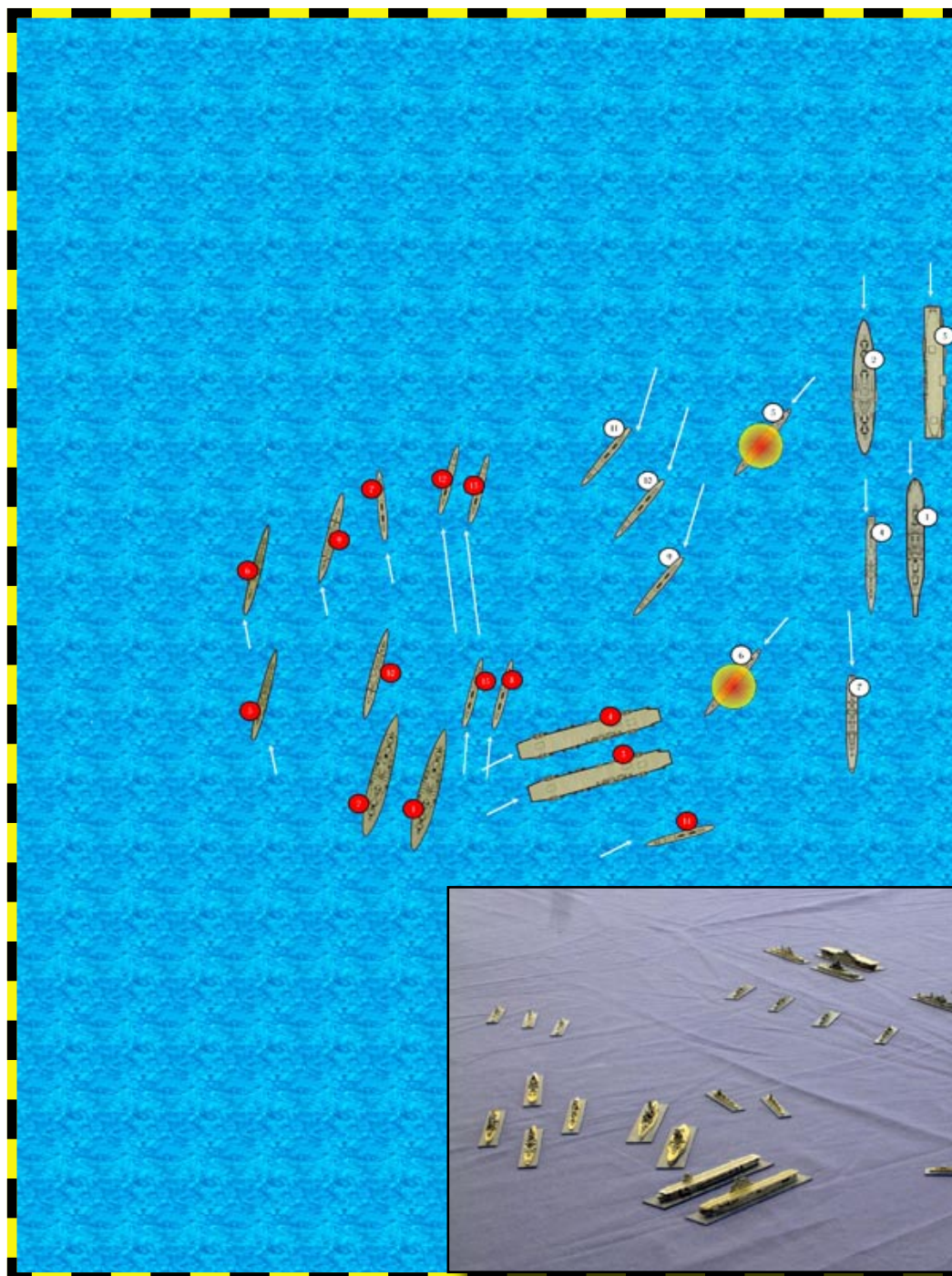
On a positive note I manage to cripple one cruiser plus the lead enemy battleship, but the situation for Team Nick the Greek is not looking all too clever. The *Yorktown* and *Iowa* are fine, I have one destroyer (with no torpedoes), have lost air superiority, both my remaining cruisers are crippled and the *New York* took a bit of a battering from one torpedo salvo that managed to score a hit. The next turn I would need to have some fabulous luck to get back into the game otherwise I will not be able to claim uber-bragging rights.



Between Nick's destroyers charging through my front lines and my long lances from two turns back, this was The Turn Of Torpedoe Death. He sunk a pair of my destroyers. I totally hammered his battle line. This is an exchange I could live with.

Behind the torpedoes, the battleships and cruisers continued their exchange of explosive shells - although the *Mutsu* was crippled the sheer weight of firepower my superior numbers could bring to bear was starting to take its toll.

It was about this time that I realised that having achieved nearly total air superiority, there wasn't anything I could do with it. Abusive skywriting, maybe?



Turn 4



So much for uber-luck. I did manage to sink a Battleship (the already crippled *Mutsu*). Unfortunately that was about all I did as my inability to cause any decent criticals is

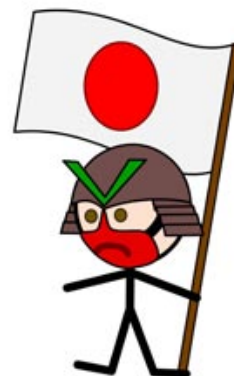
really hampering my efforts. When the *New York* suffered near maximum hits from the *Nagato* with six critical hits (in one salvo Chris managed more criticals than I managed in the entire game) meant that I was now really backed up against the wall. Of course the critical wrecking the *Iowa's* engines failed to help much either (stupid torpedo bombers). Which was about all she wrote.



Well, the *Mutsu* became an impromptu submersible, but after my slow-loading torpedoes started firing again it was all over. Wait... did someone mention submersibles?

Yes, that's right. I'd forgotten all about my mini-fleet of submarines. Oops. I'd meant to bring them on during turn 2 but forgot at the start of every movement phase. They were still humming along under the waves as the last of the US fleet sank down to meet them.





Disaster for the US fleet, then. I only have myself to blame, being too cocky with my fleet selection and rolling pitiable dice with my longer ranged guns. But even good dice rolls can not cope with sheer stupidity. When I next play Chris in a game of *Victory at Sea* I will not be anywhere near so cavalier in my fleet selection, especially if he chooses the Japanese again. Perhaps I should have paid more attention to Chris poring over the rulebooks all the time since we were told that we would be engaging in a battle report.

My basic tactics (stay away from the Japanese fleet and then suddenly charge when they get close in order to launch my own salvos) were fine, just the poor fleet selection did me in. The aircraft actually played their part in this game (which was a bit of a shocker, in all honesty, since aircraft are normally pretty ineffectual in the basic rules), which was good for a change. Having aircraft hunt down Japanese destroyers is certainly a good use for them, although next time I will take more than one carrier (and replace some of the aircraft with some of the better models).

Well, that worked pretty much exactly according to plan. Even 'ignore the Iowa' worked better than I thought it would, since as Nick's cruisers were softer targets it was more efficient to remove them (and their lighter guns) than make any sort of halfway attempt to sink the big ship. Of course, I probably could have sunk it on turn 6 or so, but that was more due to good luck with torpedoes (the *Hatsukaze* worked wonders, all alone on the right flank) than anything else. Although air superiority wasn't everything I wanted it to be it still seemed like a good thing to have, especially in the sort of overwhelming measures I had.

Perhaps when *Order of Battle* is done (with upgraded planes and kamikaze rules) I can try out the all-aircraft 'fleet'.

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