

STARLETTER #63

The Official *Star Fleet Battles* Newsletter

November 1989 — January 1990

DELUXE F&E IS HERE!

The new Deluxe Edition of *FEDERATION & EMPIRE* is now being shipped to the stores. This is a complete overhaul of the system with many changes and corrections.

The new Deluxe Edition includes 14 countersheets (4 more than the original), and 12 of these are all new. (We replaced sheets 1-8 with three sets of four new sheets designated A, B, C, and D. There were minor changes to #9 and #10, which became E and F.) It also includes an expanded 80-page rulebook (with all addenda and many overhauled rules), the original charts and maps, plus the capital assault charts that formerly resided in *Fleet Pack*. The retail price is now \$44.95.

Some obvious errors on counters have been corrected (e.g. Lyran CV), the Gorn DD was raised to 5, and all of the carrier groups were revised to use the new Carrier Escort Damage System (which essentially allows you to score Directed Damage on the smallest escort in the group). About 90% of the counters are unchanged.

The Economics Form, Base Status Chart, Planetary Status Record, Extra Ships Record, Neutral Zone Control Record, and Carrier Group Status Record have been combined into an 11x16" Player Folio for your convenience. The game includes several copies to avoid making you resort to photocopying right away.

FLEET PACK has also been changed. It now includes one copy of each of the four new sheets (A, B, C, and D), giving you a much better mixture of counters. The capital assault charts (moved to F&E itself) have been replaced by several copies of the Player Folio. The price was lowered to \$12.95.

We also have a DELUXE F&E CONVERSION KIT, available in your store for \$14.95, which includes the 80-page Deluxe rulebook, copies of the Player Folio, and one set of countersheets A, B, C, and D. A handy conversion card is provided to allow you to keep using your old counters for the ships that changed in the Deluxe edition.

And finally we have F&E FOLIO PACK with 48 copies of the Player Folio for only \$4.95. (You can't photocopy them for that!)

Yes, we know you really want TOTAL WAR, but analysis proved that we could not finish TOTAL WAR until the problems with the basic game were fixed. We hope to have TOTAL WAR this year (a separate staff section is concentrating on that project to the exclusion of all others), but we'll have to see how the Doomsday schedule works out.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

On a space-available basis, Starletter will announce events of interest to SFB players, including conventions, PBM campaigns, local tournaments, club meetings, special store events, etc. ADB and TFG make no warranty as to the quality, dependability, reliability, or reputation of the items announced. Send your announcements to ADB in care of TFG. Please get them in as early as possible. Readers should include a stamped self-addressed envelope when requesting information from one of the events listed here:

➤ UMCON Convention, Michigan Gaming Club, 17-19 Nov. SFB and other events. Info: P O Box 4491, Ann Arbor MI 48106.

➤ OWLCON XI, 9-11 March 1990, Rice University. Major convention with many gaming events including SFB. Contact RSFAFA, P O Box 1892, Houston TX 77251.

➤ SOONERCON, 17-19 Nov, Oklahoma City. Central Plaza Hotel, Reno and Eastern St. (I-35 and I-40 intersection). Info: P.O. Box 1701, Bethany, OK 73008

➤ SFB EAST COAST INVITATIONAL, 20-21 Jan 1990. Sponsored by Simulation and Speculative Gaming. American Martyrs School, corner of Union Turnpike and Bell Blvd, Bayside, Queens, NY. Referee John Hammer will begin preliminary rounds at 8am Saturday with finals on Sunday. Other SFB events (including the famous Circle of Death) will be held on Sunday. Many famous SFB Rated Aces will be on hand and looking for blood. Info from John Hammer, 97-10 Bell Blvd, Bayside, NY 11364 (718-479-8088).

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

➤ COUNTERS: Task Force has a quantity of the "old" 1986 edition F&E counters remaining in the warehouse. As these cannot be used in the new edition, TFG is offering them for sale in packages of 10 sheets for \$7.50 per pack. (Imagine! Twice the counters of *Fleet Pack* for half the price! Run, do not walk, to the Post Office to send in your order!) TFG charges \$2 per order for shipping and handling. (The first 90 packages will have a complete set of 1-10, but after that TFG reserves the right to substitute extra copies of some F&E countersheets for those that run out first, but all will be F&E.)

➤ SORRY TO BE LATE: This issue should have been mailed in November but an incredible assortment of printing gremlins conspired to delay it. That shouldn't happen again.

DOOMSDAY IS COMING!

Task Force Games and Amarillo Design Bureau are happy to announce that the Captain's (Doomsday) Edition of SFB will appear in the Spring or Summer of 1990. An exact release schedule is being worked out now. (Rumor has it that Soviet President Gorbachev refused to set a date for the arms control summit until he knew the release date of Doomsday. We are unsure if he wanted to play the game or just avoid being overshadowed in the media.) We plan to have the new rulebooks out in time for the Origins tournament. More on Doomsday in the next issue of Starletter.

One point should be made as soon as possible. We are making every effort humanly possible to correct every mistake, goof, glitch, imbalance, and inconsistency in the Doomsday rulebook. But once that rulebook is published, it is going to be *EXTREMELY* difficult to change anything in it. Unlike the current Commander's Edition (in which addenda was the norm rather than the exception), there isn't going to be much addenda for Doomsday.

Task Force President John Olsen was recently quoted as saying "Read My Lips! No More Addenda! I want a simpler, kinder rulebook. I see a thousand points of sale."

The bottom line of all that is that if you think *ANYTHING* in the Commander's Edition is "wrong," your last chance to get it changed is fast approaching. We are willing to at least look something over and see if maybe it really is wrong, but *ONLY* if we hear about it as soon as possible (right now would be fine). Use the following format to submit "Requests for Review" (Send to ADB c/o TFG):

Type on one side of 8.5x11 white paper. Put each rule you want us to look at (G23, F2, H7, etc.) on a separate page. For ships, put ships of one race on the same page. Give a brief justification for your Request, such as a comparison of the BPV of all of the CWs to request a change on any one of them. If you want a reply, include one stamped reply envelope for every four pages of Requests. You don't have to ask for a reply; we cannot guarantee when you will get one.

(SP1211.0) SCOUT REPORT

(Y170)

by Ryland Leyton

Shortly after the ISC incursion into Romulan territory in Y169, the Romulans sent a long-range automated probe into ISC territory to gain what information it could. Months later the probe returned, damaged by unknown causes. Due to its damaged navigation computer, it ran out of fuel in a nebula in the Romulan-Gorn Neutral Zone. The Romulans sent their nearest ship to recover the probe, but Gorn Intelligence intercepted the messages and sent their nearest ship to recover the probe first.

(SP1211.1) NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 2, the Gorn player and the Romulan player.

(SP1211.2) INITIAL SET-UP

The entire map is a Nebula (P6.0). Players should review this rule section before starting the scenario. There are many systems which do not function in a nebula.

Romulan SkyHawk-A in 0424, facing B, WS-III, speed 4.

Gorn DD in 4201 facing E, WS-III, speed 4. This ship has not received the DD+ refit.

(SP1211.3) LENGTH OF SCENARIO: The scenario continues until one ship is destroyed or captured or has disengaged.

(SP1211.4) SPECIAL RULES

(SP1211.41) The map is fixed; it does not float.

(SP1211.42) There are no fighters or PFs in this scenario.

(SP1211.43) Neither player knows where the probe is at the start of the scenario. Each player rolls a die before the Energy Allocation Phase of each turn. A die roll of "1" indicates that the player who rolled the "1" has detected the probe's homing beacon and discovered its location. The fact of this discovery is known to both players, but only the player who rolled the "1" knows the location. The other player continues rolling until he also rolls a "1," at which point he also learns the location of the probe. This reflects the probe's homing signal being deflected and scattered by the nebula's interference.

(SP1211.44) Place Klingon drone counters 1-7 in a group. Place Kzinti drone counters 1-6 in another group. Place Klingon drone counters 11-15 in a third group and Kzinti drone counters 11-16 in a fourth group. All groups are placed upside down, and each group is shuffled. (Do not shuffle the groups together!)

The first player to roll a "1" takes one drone counter from each group. (The remaining counters can then be put away.) These counters reveal the location of the probe as follows:

Column: Multiply the single-digit Klingon drone number by six and subtract the Kzinti drone number. A final result of 0 is treated as 42.

Row: Multiply the second digit of the double-digit Klingon drone number by six and subtract the second digit of the Kzinti double-digit drone number. Treat 0 as 30.

The four selected drones are set aside face down after the player who rolled a "1" notes their numbers and determines the location of the probe. When the other player rolls a "1" (or at the end of the scenario), he examines the counters and both players verify the location of the probe.

(SP1211.45) To recover the probe, a ship must dock with it (C13.9). In this case, the ship must be at a speed of 1 or less and no tractor beam is required.

(SP1211.46) Neither player can fire at the probe. Once one ship has docked with the probe, the other player cannot recover the probe. See (SP1211.5).

(SP1211.5) VICTORY CONDITIONS

The only condition for victory is recovery of the probe; the information gained from it is worth more to either government at this time than any destroyer. The victor is the one who recovers the probe and exits the map first. The player who disengages with the probe wins a major victory. If the other player destroys him before he leaves the map, that player wins a minor victory.

(SP1211.6) VARIATIONS

The scenario can be played again under different conditions by making one or more of the following changes:

(SP1211.61) Replace the ships with cruisers, PF tenders, or exploration cruisers.

(SP1211.62) Add an ISC DD in hex 4215; it must prevent the other two ships from recovering the probe. It may do this by recovering it itself or by destroying a ship that has it aboard.

(SP1211.63) Replace the Gorn ship with a Federation CL, DD, or FF.

(SP1211.64) Add an Orion DW or CR to hex 0116. It is there to steal the probe and gains no points for destroying it.

(SP1211.65) Each of the location die rolls determines part of the location. If a player rolls a "1" he may pick the drone from the first (Klingon 1-7) group (or examine the drone picked by the player who previously rolled a "1"). If the player rolls a "2" he can pick (or examine) the drone from the Kzinti 1-6 group. If the player rolls a "3" he can pick (or examine) the drone from the Klingon 11-15 group, and if the player rolls a "4" he can pick (or examine) the drone from the Kzinti 11-16 group. Obviously, once any player picked the drone from one of the four groups, the other drones from that group can be put away.

(SP1211.66) Use two or all three of (SP1211.62, (SP211.63), and (SP1211.64).

(SPT211.7) BALANCE

The scenario can be balanced between players of different skill levels by one or more of the following:

(SP1211.71) Permit one or both players to start knowing the counter from the Klingon 1-7 group.

(SP1211.72) Replace any ship with a larger or smaller ship.

(SP1211.8) TACTICS

There are two basic strategies: destroy the enemy and *then* look for the probe, or recover the probe and run.

(R2.943) FEDERATION WAR DESTROYER

The Federation NCL class had effectively taken over the shipyards that originally produced the Destroyer class, ending DD production before the Federation entered the General War. This left a gap between the NCL and the FFG which was covered by the steadily dwindling force of DDs and CLs. By Y174 the shortage of these classes was becoming acute, particularly with so many of them being converted to support roles such as scouts, carrier escorts, and minesweepers. Recognizing the need for a War Destroyer class, the Federation commissioned two competing designs, the DW and the FFB. The DW was eventually selected as it was larger and more capable than the FFB. The first prototype (NCC-2400 *Humberto Ortega*) appeared in Y175, and production was begun in Y176 (with NCC-2401 *Enrique Bermudez*).

(R2.947) DWS: Scout variant. Replace photons with sensors.

(R2.948) DWD: Drone variant. Replace photons with drone-B.

(R2.949) DWE: Carrier Escort variant. Replace photons with drone-G. Replace ph-3s with ph-Gs.

(R2.950) DWT: Cargo variant. Delete photons and forward phasers. Delete AWRs. Split batteries into two singles (one in the AWR slot). Move labs to photon position, bridge to forward phaser position, shuttles to bridge position (1 admin, 1 HTS). Add 9 cargo boxes.

(R2.951) DWM: Minesweeper variant. Delete tractors and AWRs. Move transporters to AWR position. Replace photons with tractors; add 6 mine racks (3 on each side, in tran/trac positions); increase front shield to 36; has 2 MSS, 1 Admin.

F&E: DW, combat factor 6, build cost 4, command rating 5. Production: Y175 replace 1xNCL with 1xDW in fall. Y176 replace 1xNCL and 1xFF with 2xDW in both turns. In Y177 and thereafter, replace 2xNCL and 4xFF with 6xDW in each turn.

DWS: Factors ♦2-6/1-3, normal sub/conversion.

DWD: Factors (4)6/3, within NCD limits in DF&E.

DWE: Factors 4-6/2-3. Replaced DEs in carrier groups.

PLAYTEST REPORT FORMAT

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

REPORTS ON SHIPS

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

REPORTS ON SCENARIOS

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

REPORTS ON RULES (Can be used for existing rules)

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

NEXT ISSUE OF STARLETTER

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

PUBLISHER'S INFORMATION

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SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

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

BACK ISSUES

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

- #57: Revised rule (G7.9), Romulan RoyalHawk SSD, Playtest Scenario SP463 Tang-Chi (Kzinti fighters vs Klingons).
- #58: Revised SSDs for Gorn DD, Orion CR, Fed CVA; new SSDs for Klingon G1N, Lyran Bobcat-C.
- #59: Kzinti Combat Tug SSD, Playtest Scenario SP60 Battle of Adanerg, F&E rule (308.8) Starbase Incremental Damage.
- #60: Playtest Scenarios SP636 Mirror Image Monster and SP598 Mating Frenzy (dragons!), F&E rule (308.7) Formations, SFB Historical Scenario cross-reference grid.
- #61: Klingon F5W War Destroyer SSD; Playtest scenario SP502 Mothball Mutiny; F&E Playtest Rules Package.
- #62: Federation Battleship SSD; Playtest Scenario SP1061 Taste of Fire; F&E Micro-Scenario (1001.0) Last Link.

TASK FORCE GAMES SPARE PARTS

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

SFB ON GENIE

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

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