



STARLETTER #91

The Official *Star Fleet Battles* Newsletter

September 1994

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**TASK
FORCE
GAMES™**

SPECIAL GENCON 94 ISSUE!

Yes, this is the September issue. And yes, it was released in mid-August. What can we say? Gen Con deserves a Starletter release all its own! Even if you didn't get to Gen Con, you still got your copy of Starletter #91 almost a month early!

MAJOR NEW RELEASES!

Following on the Mega-Hits of CL15 and X1, ADB and TFG have just released *Module F1-The Jindarians* and *UFP — Federation Sourcebook* for Prime Directive! These are on the way to the stores even as you read this.

NEW SHIP FOR STAR FLEET BATTLES

(R2.959) FEDERATION MAULER VELIKOVSKY: The Feds never built a mauler, but we found this one deep in the archives of Star Fleet HQ. It was intended as a training simulator to test the concept. Spare shuttles 2, Year in Service Y172, Docking 8, Explosion Strength 26, Shock 18. Cannot separate saucer.

F&E: Use standard mauler rules. Build one per year by conversion from CA/CC (5 pts) or by substitution for CA or CC; first ship in Y172. Command Rating 8. Crippled Rating 4 (no mauler +).

CAM + 10

SCANNERS REPORT

★ CAPTAIN'S LOG #16 will be the first in a new larger format. Expect 16 more pages "and something special" (a map, or a countersheet, or a 16-page SSD book) in each issue, all for the incredibly low price of \$14.95. CL#16 is expected this fall.

★ PRIME ADVENTURES #1 will be the first issue of the new Prime Directive journal, with two killer adventures, fiction, tactics, questions and answers, and more! Expected this fall.

★ RED ALERT! The Star Fleet Battles Card Game. This is a "combat" card game, not a collectible "build a killer deck" things.

All TFG products (and spare parts for them) are available by mail. Write to TFG for a catalog and price list. All products are available from TFG mail order; include \$4 shipping and handling for all orders in the US; others ask for rates. Task Force accepts Visa, Mastercard, and Discover card for your convenience.

TASK FORCE NEWS

⊕ ALKELDA DAWN, \$11.95, #6007. The Vestrii from First Contact return in this scenario sourcebook. (Available Sept.)

⊕ SKY MARSHAL, \$7.95, #6200. The first in a new series includes articles on Ship Design Techniques, Strategy & Tactics in the Starfire Universe, and more. (Available in October.)

⊕ FOURTH INTERSTELLAR WAR: ARACHNIDS. \$19.95, #6006. Mega-scenario book, two countersheets, all of the brutal savagery of the Fourth Interstellar War comes to life. November.

SO YOU WANT TO PLAYTEST?

We do not send playtest materials to groups until they start sending playtest reports to ADB. Don't ask if you can playtest; start playtesting! Include a stamped reply envelope for an evaluation and new assignment. We need reports on:

Module P1: SP64. Module P3: SP336, SP109, SP344, SP1281 (re-test using temporal elevator), SP278.

Module P4: SP1064, SP374, SP864.

CL#12: All of them. SP225A use 3xD4 vs 4xPC. SP248 and SP225 have no T-bombs for the Tholians.

CL#13-14, MO#2: All of the SPs. CL#15: All of the SLs.

Starletter: SP221, SP266, SP268; F&E They would be King.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

Readers should include a stamped self-addressed envelope when requesting information from listed events.

➤ ORIGINS 95, 13-16 July, Philadelphia Convention Center. ADB will be the exclusive operator of large SFB events. SFB and F&E championships; Prime Directive. Info from Andon, PO Box 3100, Kent, OH 44240 1-800-529-EXPO (in Ohio 216-673-2117).

➤ GENCON 94, 18-21 August. Mostly RPGs, but does include the largest SFB event outside of Origins. Prime Directive National Championships. Info from PO Box 756, Lake Geneva WI 53147. (They promised a better room this year, with lights!)

➤ THE ORION TOURNAMENT SHIP will now use no more than ONE gatling phaser (per package) and you can forget all about that confusing special phaser damage rule. This change was made in response to player demands and takes effect immediately (and will be in effect for GenCon).

➤ Battlegroup Ithaca Con, Oct.7-9, SFB Sanctioned Patrol, contact CSSS, Cornell Univ. 129 White Hall, Ithaca NY 14850.

➤ CONQUEST, 4-6 Nov, Santa Maria CA. SFB and PD. Info: PO Box 1854, Santa Maria, CA 93456-1854

➤ OCTACON, Indianapolis IN. "Has Fallen Through".

➤ RUCON V, 5-6 Nov, Lock Haven Univ PA. Sanctioned SFB. Info: PUB Box 150 LHU, Lock Haven PA 17745.

➤ TACTICON, 16-17 Sept, Denver CO, Sheraton-Lakewood, major con, SFB and Prime Directive events.

➤ NOVAG, 4-6 Nov, Falls Church VA. SFB events. PO Box 7158, Reston, VA 22091

➤ SOUTHWEST COMIC FESTIVAL, 9-11 Dec, Austin TX Convention Center. SFB and PD events. PO Box 650201, Austin, TX 78765-0201. Task Force Games will be there.

➤ WHERE'S MY ACE CARD? We hear this every month or two, usually from someone who won a convention we have never heard of. In most cases, the judge never mailed in the paperwork, and we cannot send out an Ace card on the say-so of the winner. Be sure the judge at your event mails the forms! Get his name and address and keep a copy of the program until your ace card arrives (which takes 4-8 weeks after we get the paperwork).

➤ STAR FLEET WARLORD: Agents of Gaming operates this play-by-mail strategic SFB campaign in the Greater Magellanic Cloud. Buy ships to search for (or conquer, or defend) resources needed to buy even more (and bigger) ships. For a rulebook (with no obligation to play), send \$5 for postage and handling to Agents of Gaming, PO Box 31571, Dayton, OH 45431-0571.

➤ LONGEST-RUNNING SFB PLAY-BY-MAIL CAMPAIGN. It began in 1985 and is now in Turn #52, Y191 in the middle of the Andro Invasion. Join us! Send a stamped self-addressed envelope to John D Berg, 609 Apollo Dr, Joliet IL 60435.

➤ STARLIST (a list of known SFB players) is available from Task Force. Send \$1 and a stamped self-addressed envelope. They hopefully will have someone within driving range for you.

➤ FREE ERRATA BOOK, listing all errata and typos for SFB, is available from TFG. Send a 9x12 envelope with 75¢ US postage to receive yours! (Canadians must provide 86¢ US postage or three IRCs. Foreigners provide six IRCs.) This errata book has been upgraded to GENIE and Compuserve.

(D3.41B) Typo: The FASTER ship moves first for this purpose.

(SP1718.0) THEORETICAL ATTACK



(Y171)

by Steven Paul Petrick, Texas

The Federation never developed a mauler, but they did run experiments in command computers assuming that they did so. The purpose was to determine if maulers might be a useful adjunct to fleet operations. Ultimately, the experiments were dropped, but this particular computer simulation became a favorite among Federation Cadets at the Academy.

The exercise was to determine if a mauler would be a useful weapon to use against a Jindarian ship. For simplification, the assumption was that a single Jindarian ship, separated from its caravan, was caught in deep space.

(SP1718.1) NUMBER OF PLAYERS: 2; the Federation player and the Jindarian player.

(SP1718.2) INITIAL SET UP

FEDERATION: Mauler *Velikovsky* in 4203, FFG *Hile Troy* in 4205, both at WS-III, heading E, speed max.

JINDARIAN: CL *Target Red* in 0204, heading D, speed 5, WS-I.

(SP1718.3) LENGTH OF SCENARIO: The scenario continues until all forces belonging to one side have been destroyed, captured, or have disengaged.

(SP1718.4) SPECIAL RULES

(SP1718.41) MAP: Use a floating map. The Federation units can only disengage in direction A or B. The Jindarian units can only disengage in direction D. Units which disengage in unauthorized directions are considered destroyed.

(SP1718.42) SHUTTLES AND PFs: No shuttles or PFs have warp booster packs.

(SP1718.421) No ship in this scenario is qualified to carry an MRS shuttle, but in a variant of the scenario where that is possible, they may be purchased [up to the limits in (J8.5)] under (SP1718.431).

(SP1718.422) There are no fighters in this scenario. In a variant in which fighters are present, use the standard deployment patterns (one EWF for each squadron of eight or more fighters) for EW fighters.

(SP1718.423) There are no PFs in this scenario.

(SP1718.43) COMMANDER'S OPTION ITEMS

(SP1718.431) Each ship can purchase additional or special equipment as Commander's Option Items (e.g., T-bombs, extra marines, etc.) up to 20% of its Combat BPV. See (S3.2) for details and exceptions. Note that whatever is spent here counts in the Modified Victory Conditions (S2.2) as victory points for the enemy.

(SP1718.432) All drones are "medium," i.e., speed-20.

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

(SP1718.433) Prime Teams (G32.0) are not available in this scenario.

(SP1718.44) REFITS: The frigate has the plus refit.

(SP1718.5) VICTORY CONDITIONS: Use the Modified Victory Conditions (S2.201).

(SP1718.6) VARIATIONS: The scenario can be played again under different conditions by making one or more of the following changes:

(SP1718.61) Replace the Federation force with a mauler and one additional ship of no more than 80 BPV including refits and drone speeds, but not Commander's options. Do not use Romulan FHF maulers.

(SP1718.62) Replace the Jindarian CL with a Romulan War Eagle and Battle Hawk, both starting in the same hex.

(SP1718.63) For a larger battle, upgrade the Jindarian CL to a BCH and add a CA (no more than 140 BPV including refits and drone speeds) in hex 4201 to the Federation force.

(SP1718.64) For a more elaborate battle, add a Jindarian DD and two Jindarian FFs and add an NCL and a FFG to the Federation force.

(SP1718.65) To use fighters, add up to four fighters to the Jindarian CL (replacing prospecting shuttles) and change the Federation FFG to an FV. You might also add an FFE to each side. Use appropriate fighters for the year selected.

(SP1718.66) To use PFs, set the scenario in Y182. Add up to six PFs to the Jindarian ship (or replace it with a CLP with six PFs), and add the same number of PFs to the Federation force (set up within four hexes of the mauler).

(SP1718.67) Use a war cruiser mauler and a war cruiser instead of the CA mauler and Frigate.

(SP1718.7) BALANCE: The scenario can be balanced between players of different skill levels by one or more of the following:

(SP1718.71) Change the Jindarian CL to a Jindarian CA.

(SP1718.72) Replace the Federation FF with a Federation DD or (if you change the year) a DW or FFB.

(SP1718.73) Allow the Jindarian player to replace some of his prospecting shuttles with Meteor-1 fighters.

(SP1718.74) Set the scenario in Y180, and use fast drones.

(SP1718.8) TACTICS

FEDERATION: Use the photons for long range strikes, and try to get in close for a good shot with the mauler.

JINDARIAN: Hold your phasers for drone defense. Use your rail guns on whichever target comes to close first, and then drive off the second ship.

HISTORICAL OUTCOME: The experiment was inconclusive; ultimately, the Federation decided that maulers were not of sufficient use to adopt into the Star Fleet.

OTHER POSSIBLE OPPONENTS FOR TESTING THE CAM

All of these scenario ideas assume the CAM with one FFG in attendance. The forces below are the enemy forces. Some of these may require adjusting the year of the scenario.

CARRIER: CVE or CVL or DWV (6-8 fighters) with FFE. Set up within three hexes of 0625, speed max, WS-III.

FIGHTERS: Use 245 points worth of fighters (including drone speeds, special drones, etc.). Set up in hex columns 01xx and 02xx.

CONVOY: Four small freighters, two large freighters, two police ships. One large and one small freighter are the armed types, or one small freighter is a Q-ship. Set up within four hexes of 1020, heading A, speed 4, WS-I.

ANDRO SAT BASE with one Viper in attendance.

BASE STATION in 2215 with two police ships within 5 hexes, speed 4, WS-II.

MONITOR with support pallet escorted by one frigate (up to 80 points). Planet in 2215, mauler within 4 hexes of planet, frigate within 8 hexes of planet, speed 4, WS-I. One victory point for each point of mauler damage scored on the planet.

PLAYTEST REPORT FORMAT

We encourage all SFB players to submit reports on new ships and scenarios. *We can't print new products without playtest reports.* Anyone can playtest; your first assignment is in this very issue! For your report to be used, it must be typed or computer printed on 8.5x11 paper, or written on a report form. Each rule, ship, and/or scenario report must be on a separate page. Put your name, address, and a list of playtesters on every page.

If you include a stamped self-addressed envelope, we'll send you another assignment, or we'll tell you what needs to be improved before you can do another one. More assignments are available on GENie or CIS; you can report via Email.

All reports should be sent to Amarillo Design Bureau, Post Office Box 8759, Amarillo, TX 79114 (or to ADB\$ on GENie).

REPORTS ON SHIPS

1. List the Race, Class, and Project (900) number.
2. What mission is the ship intended for? Is it suitable? Why?
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 it in fleet battles? Describe the fleets and results. Did the ship perform its mission?
5. Are there any hidden flaws? Are power, speed, and systems adequate to the mission?
6. Is the ship recommended for publication?

REPORTS ON SCENARIOS

1. List the title and the SP number.
2. How many times did you play it? How many to completion?
We require at least two playings to completion and prefer more.
3. Is the scenario unbalanced? If so, toward whom? How much?
4. Pick one: Fun, boring, one of the best, unworkable, average.
5. Is there a "trick key" that can unlock the scenario and cause it to fall apart? If so, describe it and how you solved it.
6. List any proposed changes, variants, or balance factors.
7. Assign Priority for publication: Immediately, soon, whenever, never, in a particular product.

REPORTS ON RULES

1. List the rule number and what product the rule is in.
2. Ask your questions about how it works or what it means.
3. List any conflicts with other rules.
4. Describe any changes in balance or tactics it causes.
5. List any typos or mistakes.
6. Indicate anything that should be added, deleted, or clarified.

PUBLISHER'S INFORMATION

STARLETTER is written by Amarillo Design Bureau and published by Task Force Games. *STARLETTER* is Copyright © 1994 Amarillo Design Bureau. Subscriptions to *STARLETTER* cost \$5 for six issues (one year, First Class Mail) in the US, Canada, APO, and FPO. Overseas subs are \$10 for six issues by Air Mail. European customers write: Task Force Games Ltd., Unit 30A, Hardwick Ind. Estate, Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 2QH or call (0284) 725656. All payments must be in US funds. All checks must be drawn on a US bank and have magnetic code numbers. International Postal Money Orders are also acceptable. Send subscriptions to TFG, PO Box 50145, Amarillo, TX 79159. Make checks payable to TASK FORCE GAMES.

BACK ISSUES #80 to date available from TFG for \$2 each (US).

- #80: Gorn Fast Carrier Resupply ship and Scenario. F&E.
- #81: Battleship factors for F&E.
- #84: Old (Tholian) Galaxy Raider.
- #85: Klingon Early Years F4 SSD and scenario.
- #86: Tholian CWV.
- #87: Federation commando FF, scenario; unusual F&E ships
- #88: Lyran DWV carrier and scenario.
- #89: Frax submarine and scenario.
- #90: Jindarian Destroyer and Rail Gun rules.

Earlier issues are out of stock and are no longer available.

SFB ON GENIE COMPUTER NETWORK

Talk to the Star Fleet Staff directly by computer modem. Star Fleet is Category 10 on Page 805 Menu Item #1. Ask your local computer dealer or club for info on GENie or call GENie Client Services at 1-800-638-9636 (Voice Only). The computer system provides overnight access to the staff and the answers to your game questions. New SSDs, scenarios, and playtest modules are available for downloading on page 1020. Join in ongoing discussions of new rules and ships, or propose your own. Weekly real-time conference with SFB staff. You can contact "TFG\$" or "ADB\$" directly via Electronic Mail on GENie.

COMPUSERVE users can contact ADB at 71333,2123 or find us in the Board Games section (11) of Play-by-Mail games.

AMERICA ON-LINE: Find us in the Play-By-Mail & Strategy Gaming category of On-Line Games or you can Email "TFG1" or "SteveC ADB". TFG also has a desk in the gaming company support (GCS) area.

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