

Baboon

BABYLON 5 WARS * FLEET ACTION * GROPOS

SEPTEMBER
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Babylon 5 licence goes
**Beyond
the rim**



ISSUE
17

Farewell, old friend

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Issue No. 17

CONTENTS

- 3 Scenario: Movement among shadows
 - Richard Bax
- 4 Fiction: Crux of the Matter
 - Bruce Graw
- 6 Fiction: Lightning Strike
 - Phillip Wright
- 8 Fleet Action 2: Sulasi Sector
 - Ben Rubery
- 10 Battleforce
 - Chris Nasipak
- 11 News in Brief
- 12 Gropos: Infantry tactics
 - Hardlec
- 13 Fiction: First Contact
 - Rob Green
- 14 Crossover: Galactica
 - Todd Boyce
- 16 Crossover: Aliens
 - Alex Roberts
- 18 Background: Ch'Lonas
 - Roman Perner

BABCOM Editorial comment

AGENTS of Gaming has moved beyond the rim of the Babylon 5 universe.

Not through any choice of their own.

Warner Brothers, in keeping with recent behavior, has refused permission to extend the license beyond its present term.

This means:

- Cancellation of all in-progress B5W supplements
- Conversion of the campaign guide to the Turning Point universe
- Cancellation of the GROPOS Centauri sourcebook and further products
- Cancellation of the FA2 Babylon 5 Sourcebook
- Destruction of all AoG's unsold stock as of the end of October (not including stock in stores).

No official reason has been given by Warner, though it has been suggested by AoG that the decision was based on financial reasons.

Put simply, the AoG license was not paying enough royalties to make renewal viable.

JMS stated in a post to the usenet newsgroups that the AoG license was "dormant and not growing". This seems an odd statement given the number of product releases - both recent and in the pipeline. Gropos, FA2, a campaign system... continued B5W supplements.

The growth he was referring to must have been in relation to profit margins. Obviously, Warner expects a more profitable deal out of a new license agreement it recently formed.

Details about this new product is sketchy. What has been implied is that it is a big company, and that the product is a role-playing game.

The short life of the Wireframe and Chameleon Eclectic's B5 RPG, The Babylon Project, would suggest the game would be something different.

But JMS has been quite specific

We here at AOG wish to thank you all for your patronage and support of the Babylon 5 Wars line and related products. Without you, we couldn't have gotten this far. Please don't be bitter or upset. We did the best we could and managed to keep the license as long as possible. We have no regrets.

- agent1

in pointing out the differences between the "RPG" and B5W's board-gaming status.

Whatever the case, the Babylon 5 universe has sustained yet another body blow. One more in a long succession of blows that may have caused irreparable damage to the whole franchise.

- Crusade's quick cancellation
- Cancellation of the successful CCG.
- Ranger's failure to get up
- The Babylon Project's failure to win support.
- The feature film's failure to win financial backing.
- The cancellation of the novels.

Whatever the nature, and success, of the new B5 RPG, the overall health of B5 looks very grim indeed.

Apart from this one product, there is simply nothing else on the horizon - other than JMS's assertion that there are "current" discussions.

The future of Babylon 5 rests - for the time being - in the hands of its fan community.

Hopefully, this interest will be sustained and even grow - clearly demonstrating to Warner that their actions were short-sighted.

The only alternative is to prove them right.

JMS Speaks

> This is very sad. It is a dark time for the Babylon 5 universe.

However, another RPG company has just come on board with ideas on how to come up with some very cool stuff. More on this at a later point.

- jms

A new license has just been made with another RPG company, and they're looking to come out with their first salvo next year.

Just in the interests of accuracy.

- jms

> I will not support, buy or endorse any new B5 product IF it was produced at the expense of a long time B5 supporter (ie AOG). Cool or not

The one has never had anything to do with the other. I think WB's decision, and it was their decision, came down to a sense that the license was just sort of dormant and not growing over at AoG, and that the time and resources involved were not equal to what was coming back financially. But the licenses are non-competitive; one doesn't preclude the other since, as you note, one is an RPG and the other, AOG game, is a tactical starship combat game. You don't have to cancel the one to do the other, one has nothing to do with the other. You could have both going at the same time, or one, the other, or none.

My comment was in response to the statement that NO new licenses are being given out, which is patently false. In addition to the RPG, there are other licenses also under current discussion.

- jms

Movement amongst the Shadows

B5W Scenario
By RICHARD BAX

HAVING slipped away from the Centauri at Beta-3, Singh managed to sneak into the former Narn system of Kotok. From there the Arctic managed a harrowing but ultimately uneventful trip to Mentab where she hooked up with the Bulwark.

While the Mentabs were aware of the Arctic they turned blind eye to her activities allowing her time to repair and relax.

Ultimately, Earthdome intelligence determined where the Arctic and prepared a strike group to bring back or destroy wayward cruiser once and for all.

Fortunately, Singh's remaining allies within Earthdome caught wind of the planned attack and got word to Singh. Singh again sent the Bulwark off alone towards the Gaim home system while he and the Arctic made jumped towards Coriana. Singh knew the low tech Coriana people that inhabited the sixth planet would offer no resistance so he assumed it would be a relatively simple matter of jumping in and then proceeding on to the Brakiri held system of Gamma-7 where he would again rendezvous with the Bulwark.

However, as he approached Coriana, sensors picked up an object moving at high speed towards the Arctic.

Disconcertingly, the ship was approaching from perpendicularly to the navigation beacon, almost as if it did not need the beacon to navigate.

Singh ordered all weapons to be armed and immediately dropped back into normal space. As the Arctic departed hyperspace, a surge in the heavy particle cannon was detected. In response automatic safety interlocks down checked the huge weapon and powered it down. A few moments later the Arctic was joined by something that seemingly phased into being.



SET-UP

Singh: Heavy Cruiser Arctic, along with any Thunderbolts remaining after the two previous scenarios with the lost Thunderbolts now replaced with Aurora's. Artic is in hex 0304, speed 8, heading 3.

Shadows: Shadow Destroyer in hex 3928, speed 12, heading 6.

SPECIAL RULES

Use a floating map.

All fighters may be deployed within 5 hexes of their mother

ship, course and speed same as the mother ship. Fighters may not ram.

The Arctic has had all damage sustained during the previous two scenarios repaired. The exception is if a side had been destroyed at which point only the structure and the thrusters have been repaired.

The Arctic jumped in to normal space 2 turns ago and cannot jump out for another 18 turns. In addition, the heavy particle cannon is unavailable for use during this scenario. The power may be used for other activities and the weapon can still take damage.

The Shadow Destroyer phased in the previous turn and cannot phase back into hyperspace for another 7 turns.

Victory Conditions

The Arctic wins if it manages to survive. Any other result is considered a loss.

HISTORICAL OUTCOME

The shadow destroyer moved in while the Arctic lined up behind its fighters. In the initial pass, the destroyer proceeded to annihilate the Aurora fighter group with a barrage of cutter bolts. In return the Arctic managed a solid hit with one heavy laser and a glancing blow with the second while the Thunderbolts continued to close. Closing the range still further, the Arctic traded medium laser fire against shadow's heavy phasing pulse cannons. The entire starboard side of the Arctic was brought down in almost an instant and heavy casualties were reported. Fortunately, the second flight of Thunderbolts dove in under the cover fire of the Arctic and from point blank range gutted the destroyer. Heavily damaged, the Arctic recovered her remaining fighters and jumped into hyperspace.

* * *

To be continued



THE CRUX OF THE MATTER

(Fiction: part 1)
By BRUCE GRAW

JOHN Sheridan's first recollection upon returning to consciousness was of the dream, a pleasant fantasy involving that lovely brown-haired scientist, Anna. There was a wedding, and various comments from friends about how they had nothing whatsoever in common. Then, the honeymoon in Aspen...his subconscious was mixing his overactive imagination with ancient memories of his last trip to Earth ten years ago. A different girl then, but in his mind, Anna's face was superimposed on that wonderfully curvaceous body.

Sheridan snapped back to awareness as he suddenly remembered she was dead. They all were, as he should be. Or was. But if he was dead, should his head really be hurting so much?

Sitting up, he realized he could see nothing around him except pure white, almost blinding light. He squinted, trying to see something--anything--that was recognizable. Even the ground seemed to be made of solid light. The floor, if it was indeed a floor, was soft and pliant, and actually quite comfortable, but had no cracks or blemishes of any kind. He felt as though he were sitting on air.

Funny, he thought, I would have expected heaven to have clouds. Or at least something other than just light everywhere. Where were the pearly gates? Where were the hymns and trumpets? What about the guardian angel that was supposed to greet him when he arrived?

A moment later, he had his answer.

The angel drifted towards him slowly and with

I started this story a while ago, just for fun. The general idea was to use it as the centerpiece for a product we later decided not to use. This is part 1. Part 2 has been written (if you want to see it). If people like this tale, I can continue one part per issue.

-Agent One

deliberation. The golden, cloaked figure looked just like what he expected, but without the halo. Seemingly made of light, he/she--or it?--hovered above what his mind told him was the ground. The face was--well, of course it was angelic, but also androgynous, pure white, and utterly expressionless.

As the angel drew closer he realized he could discern no blemishes or imperfections, no traces of color whatsoever. There did not even seem to be pupils in the eyes. The being seemed clad in flowing white robes, cascading down around and behind itself, but the shape and style of the clothing remained indistinct. There might've been wings, but he couldn't be sure. The brightly glowing being wasn't walking, that was for sure, but how it was moving baffled him.

The angel stopped a few feet away from Sheridan, staring into his eyes. It seemed to be evaluating him, as though studying his entire self all at once. He suddenly realized it might be judging him. Maybe it was reading his mind? What was he supposed to be thinking at this

moment? How should he feel in the presence of an angel? Shock? Awe? Reverence?

What do you say to an angel, anyway?

The creature, whatever it might be, spoke first. Its voice was mellifluous, almost chiming. The mouth did not move at all, and there were no movements of the face or throat to suggest speech. Sheridan heard the voice anyway, or at least something his mind interpreted as a voice.

"You should not be here," the angel said plainly.

Without thinking, he replied, "You mean I shouldn't be dead?"

The being of light ignored him. "This is not your place or time," it declared. "The man and the time must meet."

"What?" Sheridan raised an eyebrow involuntarily. "What's that supposed to mean? Are you sending me back?"

The glowing creature did not answer, but instead began to drift away, fading back into the light. Or maybe it was just getting smaller, Sheridan couldn't be sure. After a moment it diffused completely into the background, and he couldn't focus on it any more. The abrupt departure left him no more enlightened than he was before its arrival.

Well, that wasn't entirely true. There was one thing he was pretty sure of--that wasn't an angel. He wasn't entirely sure what it was--a hallucination, some kind of energy being, an advanced hologram, or something else. But it wasn't an angel. It was too ghostly, too unemotional, and too damn confusing. What was all that malarkey about a meeting between a man and a time, any-

way? And why didn't it answer his questions? He'd been treated as if he wasn't there at all.

"Perplexing, aren't they?"

Sheridan whirled, surprised. That was a real voice, not the tinkling sing-song of the not-really-an-angel!

Behind him stood a perfectly ordinary-looking man. The new arrival was tall, with dark slicked-back hair and the pudgy midsection that accompanies middle age. He was wearing a black suit and tie, impeccably shined shoes, and gold cufflinks that seemed to glow with their own light. His broad grin betrayed his amusement with Sheridan's predicament.

"Who the devil are you?" Sheridan blurted.

"Interesting choice of words," the stranger said, still smiling widely. His accent was plainly North American, but Sheridan couldn't place it precisely. "Of course, I'm not the devil, my friend, any more than the creature that greeted you was an angel. As I'm sure you've already guessed."

"How did you know that?" Something about the man's struck Sheridan as disreputable, as though he could not entirely be trusted. Maybe it was his smug demeanor, or something in his body language, but he knew at once he didn't like him.

"An educated guess, John. You don't mind if I call you John, do you? After all, I'm here to be your friend. You can call me Jimmy, or Jim, if you wish."

Sheridan sighed. "If you want to be my friend, Jim, you can start by answering a few questions."

"But of course. Fire away."

The man's willingness to answer was surprising, but Sheridan somehow doubted he would be completely forthcoming. Still, there was no harm in trying. "First of all, excuse me if this sounds crazy, but am I dead or not?"

The man called Jim laughed. "Of course not. You're no more dead than I am. You were rescued from your burning hulk of a spaceship just a few hours ago. Too bad none of your crew survived."

"They weren't my crew, they were passengers. Scientists, actually." He felt a twinge of regret, but there was absolutely nothing he could do for them. If that Vorlon ship hadn't come along, he would've been killed as well.

Vorlon ship?

"The angel!" he exclaimed all at once. "That was no angel. It was a Vorlon!"

"Good man. You've guessed it!" Jimmy seemed pleased, in an irritating, holier-than-thou sort of way. "Yessir, you're one of the few humans who've actually seen a Vorlon outside those big ugly suits they walk around in. This is Vorlon space, after all, right?"

Sheridan was suddenly suspicious again. Was this some kind of interrogation, trying to get him to admit his crime? Was he on trial?

"Good, you're cautious, too. No need, my friend, no need. We already know what happened--you ducked in hoping the Minbari raiders wouldn't follow. Nice move. Doomed, desperate, but not bad. Not bad at all. You like to take risks, don't you, John?"

"Only when I have to." Sheridan was choosing his words carefully now. This smacked of some kind of test, all the way around.



"Let me explain something, John." Jim began to slowly walk around Sheridan, hands clasped behind his back, all at once serious. For the first time since his sudden appearance, the man no longer wore a smile on his face. "Something has gone seriously wrong. We don't know what it is, and the Vorlons have been trying to figure it out for years. Somehow, we humans are involved. That's why they've been working with us for such a long time. They know it all revolves around us somehow."

"Okay, if you say so," Sheridan said dubiously.

Jim continued to walk, circling Sheridan continuously as he spoke. "About thirty years ago," he explained, "something happened. We don't know what, but it sent out a pretty severe ripple in--well, I guess you'd say in the space-time continuum, hokey as that sounds. The shock wave originated in Dilgar space, right in the middle of the Imperial Wars, but that's all we know. By the time we got anyone there to check it out, there were no traces of whatever caused it. If the Dilgar were involved--which they probably were, the fascist bastards--they covered up their tracks pretty damn well."

"That's all very nice, but what does this have to do with me?"

"I'm getting to that, John. This shock wave they caused--it'll have nasty circumstances in the very near future. You see, there's a storm coming, but it's unlike any storm you've ever known. It involves an ancient race you've never heard of, a race we like to call the Shadows. The Vorlons have been fighting them for eons, and if they lose--well, let's just say you wouldn't like the looks of the galaxy after all is said and done."

"Where are these Shadows now? Why haven't I heard of them before?"

"They're asleep and hiding, all scattered throughout the galaxy, but now they're waking

up. See, they fought another big war about a thousand years ago. They're the reason the Minbari are what they are today, you know. Once the Minbari were a huge, powerful, proud race. Then the Shadows came and diced 'em up pretty severe-like. You want that to happen to us humans?"

"Of course not, but--"

"Let me put this to you as plainly as I can, John." Jim stopped walking, staring at Sheridan with an intense, burning look. "If you don't help, all of that will come to pass. The Shadows will come and Earth will fall."

Sheridan thought for a moment. This man was not to be trusted, certainly. He sounded too much like a cheap lawyer. Yet there was no doubting the sincerity in that last statement. The man knew what he was talking about. "Okay, maybe I believe you and maybe I don't," Sheridan answered noncommittally, "but why do I have to help? What's so special about me?"

"We don't know that," Jim answered. All at once his smile was back. "If I knew that, I'd tell you, my friend. In case you didn't notice, the Vorlons tend to be a bit short on the details. Among other things."

"Yes, I noticed," Sheridan replied with a sigh.

"Your arrival here sparked something, though," Jim went on. "You must be pretty important, so we're giving you a ship. In all the time I've been here, I can't remember anyone ever getting a ship of their own. I'm pretty jealous, y'know."

Sheridan shook his head. Everything was coming too quickly. He had more questions than he could possibly ask. All he could do now was go with the flow. "What do you mean, a ship?" he asked weakly.

"The Vorlons are assigning one of their ships to you," explained the annoyingly smug Jim. "You'll see what I mean in a bit, but first we have to acclimate it to you. It won't take long, but it'll be a bit--uncomfortable, shall we say. You'll understand more after it's over."

"What if I say no?"

"Come on, John, if we knew you'd say no, we wouldn't have rescued you." Jim's grin was as wide as ever. "You know this is the only thing to do. Oh, and this is where we part company, I'm afraid. The rest is all up to you, and anyone else you meet along the way."

"Anyone else? Who else do you mean?"

"Now, now, no more questions." Jim reached out, shaking hands firmly with Sheridan. "We're short on time already. It's been good to know you, John."

"Likewise," Sheridan replied, but he didn't really mean it. He had a lot more questions, but it was plain there would be no answers forthcoming. He wasn't entirely sure what was going on, but one thing he did know was that a lot more was involved than what he was just told. In fact, it was obvious he was given only the least amount of information required, and that was the most confusing thing of all.

"Catch you later, then," said Jim, abruptly turning and walking away. He glanced back at Sheridan once, almost chuckling at the perplexed look on the man's face.

Poor bastard, Jimmy Hoffa thought as Sheridan's confused form faded into the light.

The mystery of the EAS Magellan

Lightning Strike

By PHILLIP WRIGHT
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OCTOBER 29TH 2267

Remote system on the
border of Vree space.

THE system dazzled the eye as the stars shone brightly within the background, the sky alighted by the distant colors of the nebulae light years away. It was a peaceful system on the outskirts of the Interstellar Alliance, left untouched, undiscovered by anyone which supremely gave it its tranquility. Space surged and rippled as the blue vortex of a jump-point formed and a long slender vessel jumped from its center in a flash of white as it returned to its normal momentum.

The Omega class destroyer, EAS Lenkov, moved slowly through the currents of space as the bright blue jump-point collapsed upon itself, closing. The large ship, it's kind the pride of Earthforce for over twelve years, leapt forward with a burst of speed towards the giant planet looming within the distance.

"All right, I want scanners on wide-beam and want the whole area searched." Captain Oscar Kasrov ordered as he arose from his seat and walked over to a scanner display that in seconds would show the results of the system scan. Searching for ship within a system alone was difficult, but a whole sector made it moreso. Within the past weeks, several ships had been lost along the unexplored sectors of Alliance space, passenger and cargo liners and science ships. It had been five years since something similar had occurred with the Centauri rampaging across trade routes with their warships. Now this same thing was happening though this time, the ships just disappeared leaving no trace of a wreckage or anything that might indicate what happened, just silence.

"Scanners running." William Roberts, Executive Officer, stated sitting at the console below his Captain, initiating the program that he had been ordered and had prepared ever since leaving the last



system two days ago.

"Grid One clear....Grid Two clear." The officer continued reporting the results as Oscar watched himself on the display in front of him.

"Grid Three...Wait!" His senses now sprung to life as the scanners alerted him to something disturbing.

"Scanners have picked up a ship Three hundred AU's out. Emitting a short-range distress beacon."

The effect was somewhat contagious as it too alerted Oscar as he

leant down closer towards the display, scanning the details as they were read out on the monitor.

"Beacon reads as that of the Explorer ship, Magellan. Lost three months ago and last seen on the border of Drazi space." The officer continued to report, Oscar turned away from the station towards the front of the chamber.

"Hold position and launch Delta squadron to investigate."

"Aye sir." The Executive Officer replied as twisted the thumb sized microphone of his headset towards

his mouth and pressed the receiver closed to his ear as he began to relay his orders to the flight deck.

"Delta squadron is launched, proceeding to target." In about half a minute, the crew of the command deck could feel beneath their feet and hear the echo as the thunderous roar of the Lenkov's Thunderbolt squadron departed from the large launch bay and into deep space and towards their target in the distance.

"Everyone form up and keep our weapons hot, we don't know what exactly is out there." The squadron

Babcom 7



By **BEN RUBERY**
OVERVIEW

THE SULASIS sector is an oasis of life and civilisation in an island between the Sulan Nebula, the Void (an expanse of space, empty of life, even largely empty of stellar bodies), and former Drass space. The Drass were wiped out in a genocidal war with an unknown enemy, and all the worlds in their space have been rendered uninhabitable, stripped of atmospheres and life. A few of the Drass escaped the destruction, and moved spinward into the Sulasis sector. Most of these survivors now reside in Illan space.

Four hundred years ago, the Chalan Empire dominated the Sulasis sector. The Casar Intelligence had not moved beyond Casar Prime, having only just landed there at this point. The races of the Akritan Defence Alliance had yet to reach space, and the Gavan and Panassans had yet to leave their home systems.

However there were a number of space faring races that now do not exist. The Jomadi Regime held the Lansha and Zador systems, and the Taan still walked on the surface of their homeworld and their colony of Wasso. The face of the sector has changed vastly in the past three hundred and fifty years. This is for one reason alone: the Macar invasion.

The Macar appeared three hundred and twenty years ago. Not much is known about them, as the only records that survived the war were in Illan, Chalan and Taan hands. The Chalan were overthrown in the aftermath of the war, the Taan lost almost all their records in the destruction of their homeworld and the Illans were too far from the conflict to have much intelligence on the Macar.

But the conflict was brutal and bloody. The Chalans required the services of mercenaries, and gave the Gavan their first advanced weapons



A custom-designed universe,
created to test the construction rules
and potential of Fleet Action 2.

By **BEN RUBERY**

and FTL drives in order to hire their services as mercenaries. They used genetically engineered Han to act as soldiers, and this set their downfall after the war in motion. Their mistakes had lasting detrimental effects to the sector.

But the Macar war began with the Jomadi coming into conflict with an enemy from the unknown territories. At first the Chalan ignored reports of the conflict, as the Jomadi had fought nomads from the unknown territories for years (though later it was theorised these nomads were fleeing from the Macar). But then the Jomadi colony on Zador was utterly obliterated, and the Jomadi turned to the Chalan for help. The Chalan had noticed a large increase in attacks on their shipping, and found evidence indicating that it was perpetrated by the enemy the Jomadi were fighting. The Chalan deployed a fleet to meet the head of the invasion and drive it back. That fleet met the invading force over the Jomadi homeworld, but the Chalan fleet was destroyed and the world sterilised. After that, the Chalan took the war deadly serious, and

mobilised their entire economy for war. The war saw the remaining Jomadi exterminated, and the Taan homeworld obliterated, making the Taan a race without a home.

The Chalan fought for fifteen years, managing to hold the Macar outside of the main body of the Chalan Empire, though Kassa, a major Chalan colony, was annihilated along with its defence fleet. The final battle of the war took place in a system now known as the Cathedral of the Dead. The Macar had massed their fleet there for the final push, but the Chalan launched a pre-emptive strike using every ship and every mercenary they could hire. There were no survivors of the battle.

In the aftermath, the Chalan were overthrown by their Han slaves, beginning the expansion of the Han Imperium. The Gavan used their knowledge of the technology they had been given in the war to build their pirate fleet and wreak havoc across known space. The Unknown territories continued to be unknown, as no race was in any position to explore them. The Taan became nomadic traders, and were forced to use cloning to maintain a viable population. The Illans continued to ignore the events in the sector, maintaining their own space, and welcoming Taan traders and eventual contact with the Panassi.

But the fall of the Chalan Empire left a large vacuum of power, which was filled by the Han Imperium. With their penchant for enslaving entire planetary populations and a long-term view of expansion, the Han Imperium grew to twenty-three systems before the conflict with the Drenth. The Han enslaved eight races, including the spacefaring Podon and Lossan, who were able to mount resistance with their own warships. The other emerging races were fearful of the expanding Han Imperium. The Akritan

FLEET ACTION 2: SULASI SECTOR

Defence Alliance was formed in response to the Han threat, and the Drenth started a large military build up, as it looked likely they would be the next targets.

The Drenth eventually launched a pre-emptive strike in the hope that by destroying the forward Han bases, they could blunt the possible attack. The Han counterstrike routed the Drenth, taking their homeworld and two colonies, and devastating three other colonies. As the butchery continued, the Illan convocation annexed the two surviving Drenth colonies to prevent further slaughter. The Illan forces deterred the Han from striking.

This is the state the sector is in now, as the Han and Illan begin a cold war that threatens to turn hot, the Drenth remnant launch revenge raids from their annexed colonies, and the Gavan pirates plague known space. The Han and Gavan have come to an understanding, the Han using the Gavan as spies and to spread chaos. The Akritan Defence Alliance has been formed by four small races that fear Han enslavement, the Casar Intelligence look with suspicion on all the races around them who are in the midst of military build-ups, and prepare their own forces for possible conflict. The Emissaries of Beshen prepare for a religious war against the false gods of the Han, and to spread the word of their faith among the aliens, as the Panassi dream of taking advantage of a conflict between the Han and the Illans to carve out an empire of their own. As raids on shipping spiral out of control the common belief is that it is finally time to end the activities of the Gavan pirates, who have sided with the Han.

The sector is primed for war, and only awaits a single mistake, a single pivotal moment, to spark a conflict drawing in every race in the sector.

RACES OF THE SULASIS SECTOR

The Illan Convocation

The Illans have maintained a peace with their neighbours for hundreds of years, avoiding conflicts with everyone but the Gavan pirates. The rise of the Han Imperium has changed that, and the basis of Illan society, the democratic convocation of the entire race to vote on issues of critical importance, is paralysed by the threat of war and the possibility of millions of casualties.

The Han Imperium

The Han proclaimed themselves gods as they transferred their consciousness to metallic humanoid forms, becoming immortal. Their empire eclipses that of the Chalan, and their destiny demands that it continue to grow, establishing the Han as rightful rulers of all the races of the sector. With their indoctrination techniques, they have enslaved nine races, and look to enslave more, making their neighbours fear them.

The Drenth Remnant

Left as refugees surviving on Illan kindness by the cruelty of the Han, the Drenth plot revenge and freedom for their people. With the few ships

they have left they launch raids into Han space, trying to disrupt their military build up. With a small shipyard and some Illan technology, they do their best to make the Han pay.

The Akritan Defence Alliance

Four small races (the Gan, Chona, Bilar and Nos) sent representatives to Akrita; a planet depopulated by the Han, and there signed a defence pact integrating their fleets to prevent their enslavement by the Han. They hope that their fleet is enough to deter a Han attack, but prepare for the worst.

The Emissaries of Beshen

A theocratic people, hoping to spread the word of their god among the unenlightened races that surround them. Their encounter with the Han, who proclaim themselves as gods, has nurtured a hatred in them that will only be satisfied when the Han are obliterated and their false idols torn down.

The Gavan Pirates

Scavengers on the margins of galactic society, the Gavan take from those too weak to oppose them. Their recent alliance with the Han has seen an influx of technology to help them spread chaos and weaken resistance to eventual Han invasion.

The Taan Traders

The Taan home world was destroyed in the Macar war. With the death of most of their race, the Taan were reduced to using cloning to maintain a viable gene pool. The Taan are the only race in the sector known to produce telepaths, and the Han regard them as a threat, paying bounties to the Gavan pirates to hunt them down. The Taan are close allies of the Illans and Akritan Defence Alliance races. They travel between the stars in city ships protected by small frigates, carrying cargoes between the stars.

The Casar Intelligence

This race of machines arrived in the sector over 400 years ago. Originally intended to prepare the way for an invading force that would arrive to find an area of space secured by their AI beachhead, the Casar are one of many probes sent out to prepare the way for expansion (the race sending them understood that many would be unsuccessful). But the Casar seem to have had an epiphany and broken their directives to serve their masters, instead carving out a few worlds for themselves, and holding them as their own. The military build up of their neighbours is perceived as a threat.

The Panassi Hegemony

The Panassi are weak in comparison to their neighbours, the Illans and Han, and feel their chance at greatness has been taken from them by these sprawling empires that hem them in. The Panassi are satisfied with playing their neighbours off against one another, waiting for them to come to blows and destroy each other, leaving

the Panassi to take the worlds they leave unprotected.

PREVIEW WITH THIS ISSUE

Each race will have a fleet list with their relevant ships and fighters, and if there is sufficient demand, a campaign map and system will be written. But to give readers a taste of the fleets I have provided four example ships and a fighter sheet with fighters for each race on it. This is to give you a taste of the technology and doctrine these fleets use.

Illan Convocation Navy

Citizen Class Light Cruiser

A common sight on the borders of Illan space, the Citizen class enforces border disputes and provides a powerful deterrent to intruders or pirates. With a squadron of fighters for patrols, several batteries of particle lances and two anti-matter torpedo tubes, the Citizen is a powerful warship capable of facing down a Han ship of equal size. It also has the virtue of shielding to protect it from enemy fire, making it more survivable in combat than many of its contemporaries.

Drenth Raider Class Light Warship

Equipped with an Illan shield system to increase its chances of returning, the Drenth use small warships like this on raids into Imperium space. A flight of fighters gives this unit the ability to provide its own fighter cover, and an attrition element that can cover a retreat. The Drenth hate the Han with a passion, but they know they may be a dying race, and act to preserve their numbers rather than needlessly throw away lives.

Han Divine Blessing Class Heavy Cruiser

The workhorse of the Han fleet, able to crush the enemies of the Imperium with its powerful molecular cannons. With a flight of fighters for local defence, and a secondary battery of disruptors, the Divine Blessing is the standard heavy warship of Han squadrons.

Gan Kansha Heavy Cruiser

With four forward penetrator railguns, the Kansha is used by the Akritan Defence Alliance as a gunship, able to move in and maul enemy craft. With an onboard squadron of Gan Hunter fighters designed to cripple enemy craft, it is no surprise the Kansha is used to assassinate key enemy ships in consort with its organic fighter support. The Gan military is the most professional of all the ADA races, and the highest honour for a Gan soldier is to be posted to a Kansha heavy cruiser. Within Gan fleets, these ships are used as command craft, but within ADA fleets the role falls to the larger Chona Heles class dreadnoughts, leaving these ships to fill the battle line and cover the slow Nos carriers.

Edited by
CHRIS NASIPAK

EVERY fleet goes through a phase of testing when new ship designs are introduced. Flaws must be found, weak points pointed out, and strengths verified. New tactics must often be created, new technologies verified. No new ship sets sail without it.

And so it is time for us to make our own tests...

The Battleforce assignment: Select a unit and its replacement to test in battle against one another. Supplement each with appropriate escorts and expert offices to provide a BPV-balanced fleet and tactical analysis.

Scenarios:

There are so many different possible battle situations which could arise that it is nearly impossible to test them all. Therefore, we will select a representative handful for use in comparing each fleet.

One: The Meeting Engagement: Each fleet enters at an agreed-upon speed from opposite sides of the standard mapboard. Use a floating map.

Two: Jump-point Ambush: Run twice, once with each fleet as attacker and defender. Attacking fleet secretly designates jump-point target(s), then defending fleet sets up. Attacker enters via jump points in the usual fashion. Use a floating map.

Three: Fixed-Point Defense: Run twice, once with each fleet as attacker and defender. Add to the defender's fleet a disabled (no thrust, no weapons) capital unit which they must defend from attack. The map may float, but if in doing so the disabled unit leaves the board, the attacker is considered to have won immediately (the defenders have been drawn off-target long enough for other forces to attack the target).

THE BATTLEFORCES

Behold, The Power Of Cheese...
(Peter "enlightened bystander" Lloyd)

New Hotness:

1x Warlock Heavy Destroyer- 1800
50x Heavy Missiles- 200
18x Star fury-Gammas- 1098
6x Badger Long Ranged Fighters- 420

NEW HOTNESS...



OLD & BUSTED

72x Class-Y Dogfight Missiles- 144
48x Basic Fighter Missiles- 384
1x Hyperion-Theta Cruiser- 705
1x Hyperion- Zeta Cruiser- 725
12x Star fury-Alphas- 684
Total- 6160

Old +Busted:

1x Nova Dreadnought (Beta)- 1350
-Expert Security Officer- 68
-Expert Laser Technician- 203
-Expert Navigator- 95
-Expert Helmsman- 34
-Expert Scanner- 95
-Expert Engineer- 68
-4 ADTs, on the Interceptors- 96
18x Star fury-Gammas- 1098
6x Badger Fighters- 420
72x Class-Y Dogfight Missiles- 144

48x Basic Fighter Missiles- 384
1x Hyperion-Theta Cruiser- 705
1x Hyperion- Zeta Cruiser- 725
12x Star fury-Alphas- 684
Total- 6169

New Hotness Tactics: The Nova is more manoeuvrable, better defended, better able to deal with damage and better attacking with its lasers, which are probably its only threats to you. You need it to die relatively quickly, so that the repair advantages aren't possible. You've got to flood its Interceptors with fire, so that they can't intercept them all. It's likely that he will target the HPCs with the Interceptors, and they may not get through. Don't worry though, as your ships have lots of guns. Keep the escorts and

Badgers close to the 'lock, and fire all forward guns in one turn. You probably want him within twenty hexes for the missiles, which will be killing range for the Nova. The turn that you're going to enter twenty, go all defensive and put interceptors and SPBs on defence. Next turn go all offensive and fire everything at him. Don't fire off anything other than defences before this. Hopefully this volley will Melbourne him (Take off the Nose), and cause lots of primary damage. This may be disturbed if he sends forward the two Hyperions or his Badgers. If this happens, try to cope with single or two turn rechargers. DO NOT FIRE THE HPCS UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES. They are one-shot guns, and you need them for the Nova.

Old +Busted Tactics: Send your escorts forward together and fire everything at the Cheeselock. The best result is the Discharge of the HPCs- They normally get just one shot, and it's better to have these against the Hyperions than against the Nova. When you get to a range with 15+ to hit, fire all 14 LPAs as Lasers, the break to the weaker side of the Warlock.

Try to get your last four LPAs towards him, especially towards his fighters. Start to turn back as soon as possible- even though your engines are improved, you're still an Earth Force Dreadnought. It will take you a while to get back into position for your next shot.

Once Upon A Vree
(Steve "Kizarvexis" Austin)

Old & Busted(?)

1 Xorr War Saucer (ISD 2210)
- 2 Expert Turret Officers
- 1 Expert Navigator
- 1 Expert Technician
1 Xeel War Carrier
6 Tzymm Heavy Fighters
12 Zorth Light Fighters
1963

New Hotness

1 Xill Battlesaucer (ISD 2258)
1 Xeel War Carrier
6 Tzymm Heavy Fighters
12 Zorth Light Fighters
1970

The expert navigator will make the Xorr even more maneuverable than the Xill, but since Vree turrets have



360 degree arcs, it shouldn't make too much difference against a Vree opponent. Since Vree will generally turtle until close enough to fire, the Expert turret officer's sheltering ability shouldn't make too much of a difference vs another Vree ship (except maybe against fighter strikes.), but the +1 to-hit for weapons fire from the turret will be appreciated. The expert technician can get the Xorr a sensor value of 10 by turning off the Antiproton Guns. The Vree expert officers on the Xorr would be even better against non-Vree opponents due to the Vree tactics and weapons's arcs. The Xill's superior anti-fighter firepower should help it's fleet survive better, but AM-Shredder fire should be saved for the Xorr. Both sides will of course turtle and charge to firing range. The Xorr should try to stay at least 11 hexes away from the Xill and force it to use it's two AM Shredders in cannon mode, while returning fire with it's 3 AM cannons. the Xeel carriers will stay very close, same hex, of each ship to maximize the Anti-fighter fire. If the Xill can get within 10 hexes of the Xorr during a turn, the Xeel covering the Xorr should move at least two hexes away from the Xorr. In each fleet the Zorth's will fly CAP, while the Tzymm's try to get within range for a fighter strike.

Return of the Son of Revenge of Del Putani (drimdal)

Old :
Centauri Celerian warcruiser (isd 2007)
upgraded with expert political officer who brings along his younger nephew an expert helmsman, exp navigator, elite crew, +1 thrist, +1 sensors. 3 gunsights one for each assault laser.
2 Talvan attack cruiser (isd 2006)
1 Kendari fleet scout (ISD 1966)
Sakar carrier (ISD 1980)
4 Balciron (ISD 2005)
24 Glaive light fighters
24 Phalan Assault fighters
6 Phalan-M missile fighters with 2 normal&2 Y missiles
Points : 6958

New :
Centauri primus
2 Darkner
1 Covran
1 Balvarix
4 Mograph

24 Senti
12 Rutarian
points : 6968

Our good friend Del Putani (I'm sure he doesn't mind being mentioned here) centauri of the old school always liked his little old ships. kept them clean and in a very good shape. During the war of retribution many other houses had taken old ships who were moth-balled and tried flying them. It was a disaster as most were prone to falling apart. Not so for Putanis forces who where in prestine condition. He received a lot of criticism for still using those ships and in an attempt to wipe the smile of his adversaries faces he challenged them. He himself boarded his Celerian warcruiser. outfitted with the finest crew he had prepared to show those upstarts a lesson.

Warrior Caste Cookout Turns Ugly: Film At Eleven (hplrmnky)

Team Old and Busted (6120 points)
1 x Sharaal War Cruiser (base 1600) with:
Expert Technician (144)
Expert Navigator (112)
Improved Reactor (90, since the Sharaal starts with a power deficit)
Advanced Engine Module (160) (2106 total)
24 x Tishat Medium Fighter (2040 base) with:
4 Expert Dogfighters (170 points)
4 Expert Coordinators (170 points) (2380 total)
2 x Tinashi War Frigate - 1700 points

Team New Hotness (6069 points)
1 x Sharlin War Cruiser - 1825 points
24 x Nial Heavy Fighter - 2544 points
2 x Tinashi War Frigate - 1700 points

Team Old & Busted: Accelerate the Sharaal to attack speed and pivot it so that a side, and not the precious nose, takes a pounding on the way in. At about 20 hexes, pivot back into attack posture; fire the MDs to strip off systems and lower structure armor, then FCs to further strip away systems and structure. On the next turn, use the superior maneuvering characteristics of the

"chopped and dropped" Sharaal to keep that same side in the forward arc and hit it with two AMCon's from the shortest possible range. Hope for good hit rolls (as close to 164 points of flash damage as possible!). Tinashis will attempt to engage enemy Tinashis; Tishats will stay in a protective cloud around the Sharaal and attempt to slow down the opposing swarm of Nials.

Team New Hotness: stay at speed three, pivoting and turning to bring new NLs in arc. Tinashis will help to snipe at the Sharaal on turns two and three, then close to FC range with their opposite numbers. After the Sharaal crosses the 30-hex "zone of death" between ranges 40 and 10, consider accelerating away to keep the range open. Under *no* *circumstances* allow the Sharaal to close to within ten hexes; force the TO&B captain to waste his AMCon's on long-range shots if at all possible. The Nials will keep close to home until the enemy is close, in order to take advantage of TNH fusion cannons in sweeping the sky clean of Tishats. Any Nials that survive the dogfighting will exploit holes in TO&B's anti-fighter cover.

Green! Purple! Green! Purple! Rabbit! (Madoka)

Old and Busted:
Drazi Osprey Destroyer (see Raider Brigand, Sd8)
w/ Expert Navigator
2 Flycatcher Frigates (see Raider Corsair, Sd8)
1001 pts

New(snickers)
Hotness(double snicker)
Early Shrike Heavy Destroyer (400pt version)
2 Early Merlin Frigates (300 pt version)
1000pts

Pretty near equal fight, though the Shrike does spot a little more firepower, sensors, and armour. The Expert Navigator gives the Osprey the maneuvering advantage. The Merlin Frigates, being agile, will probably end up being the deciding factor though.

* * *

JMS turns to Polaris

J. Michael Straczynski is in design and development on a series for the Sci-Fi Channel called Polaris.

This project began life in February 2001. Work on it was postponed until late June 2001 due to Straczynski's heavy workload. The contracts were finally signed in early September 2001.

As of 14 February 2002 Straczynski has turned in two scripts including one for a two-hour pilot. Straczynski completed revised script drafts in May 2002.

Straczynski says, "I've kept the basic storyline of Polaris under lock and key because it's the kind of thing which, once you hear it, you know instantly why the Sci-Fi Channel picked it up to develop, even though it's a fairly pristine area inside the genre, and I'm trying to keep competition to a minimum for now."

IMAX Star Wars

THE IMAX version of Star Wars: Episode II—Attack of the Clones will be 23 minutes shorter than the original theatrical release to fit the 120-minute capability of most IMAX platter systems, the Jordan's IMAX Web site reported. A Lucasfilm spokesperson told the site that the editing will "maintain the integrity" of the story.

Hitchhiker to go

Screenwriter Karey Kirkpatrick (Chicken Run) will continue the adaptaton of the screenplay of Douglas Adams' satiric SF story The Hitchhikers' Guide to the Galaxy, Variety reported. Adams wrote his own feature adaptation before he died last May and will receive a posthumous producing credit on the proposed film, the trade paper reported.

Jay Roach (the Austin Powers franchise) is attached to direct and will produce with Spyglass Entertainment

GROPOS: INFANTRY

By **HARDLEC**

IN MOST miniatures games that involve armored vehicles, infantry tends to be regarded with contempt. While most games provide infantry with considerable capabilities, troopers are not as fast as tanks, do not carry weapons with the range of tanks, and are usually considered weak and useless. This is far from true.

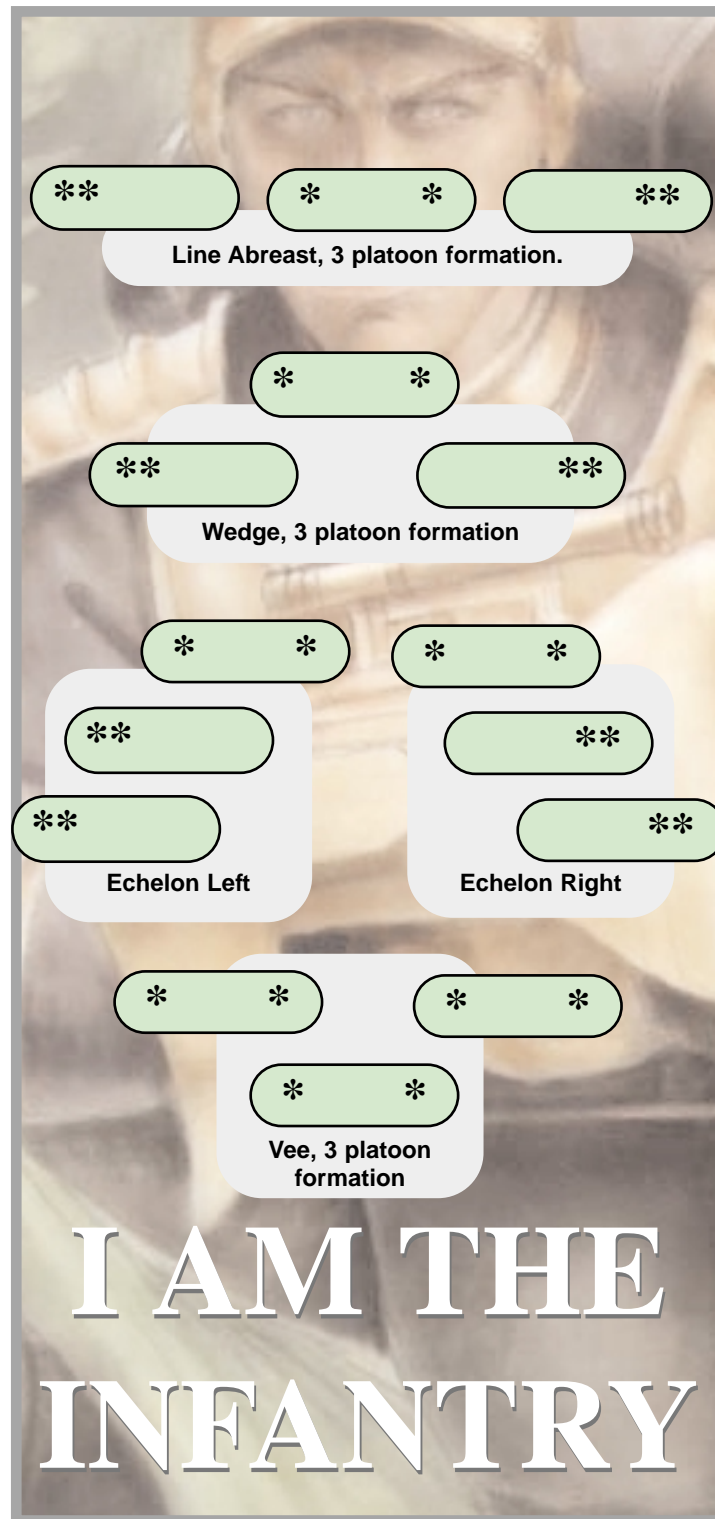
In general (this is true for most ground combat games, not just GROPOS) players do not know how to use infantry and suffer disproportionate losses with infantry. When IFVs (infantry fighting vehicles,) or APCs (armored personnel carriers) are used, this becomes even more pronounced. Players try to use IFVs or APCs like tanks, and get clobbered.

It is a maxim of modern armored combat that an assault can proceed at the speed of the infantry. Between skirmishes, infantry are carried aboard IFVs or APCs so they can move quickly toward the enemy (and get a little rest between fights.) IFVs can provide a measure of fire support for the infantry, but IFVs are not tanks. Many IFVs are actually better detailed to engage enemy infantry than anything else is. IFVs do provide some degree of support against AFVs (armored fighting vehicles), although if infantry can get close to the AFV, the AFV usually comes off second best.

Some IFVs allow the infantry to fight while mounted. Unlike horse troops, infantry in the IFV or APC is at a disadvantage in combat. They are all bunched up and easy prey for an AFV in direct fire range, or to artillery, which can use closed sheaf or pinpoint attacks to the best advantage. Most infantry as well will find it is easier to kill troopers who are still in their carriers. The obvious lesson is to get infantry out of their carriers at the right time.

The safe time is before the enemy is in direct fire range. This is not always the right time, however. An infantry unit that dismounts when a Hexus (direct fire range of 45 inches) is 46 inches away will still take 7 turns to get into close combat range, assuming the Hexus is coming right for it. This is longer than many battles last.

It is often the better choice to dismount troops (just) before the enemy is within medium range. Most carriers have high enough profiles to be relatively safe at long



** Denotes heavy weapon*

range, but they are just fresh meat to AFVs that get within medium or short range.

Keep infantry well spread out. Dispersion is an effective defense against artillery. In general, it is advisable to employ an infantry platoon in the appropriate formation: a line abreast or echelon left or right when the enemy positions are known, a wedge may be employed when the enemy positions are not known. (See diagrams above). Keep the enemy in the front and

center of the formation. Heavy weapons on either end of a line can set up a crossfire, which is usually quite effective, and it is harder to turn your flank if you have heavy weapons located there. It is a good idea for players to practice how to shift between formations within the rubrics of the rules. In reality, squads will pivot on the center squad, but as all infantry stands must move about the same rate, it takes a bit of planning to shift between formations.

Most players try to move their units at maximum speed toward the enemy. This is usually suicidal for infantry. Employ platoons in pairs, have one platoon advance while the other holds position, and can use "no-move-shoot" weapons in support. Then reverse roles and "leap-frog." If there are three platoons, it is possible to move 2 and leave 1 as fire support, although if the enemy is stubborn and in range, advance 1 platoon while two provide fire support.

Of critical importance: one element in the holding platoon should be a limited forward observer. This unit should be calling in fire on the enemy. Do it to them before they do it to you. Several infantry carriers have indirect fire weapons, and the Minbari Shyreich and EA Modi are excellent on-board indirect-fire support vehicles. Keep them in range of the enemy and behind cover, and let your infantry spotters drop steel from the sky on your enemy. Heavy ATGMs from infantry carriers can be fired indirectly as well.

Most AFVs have heavy direct fire weapons that are all but useless against infantry at long range. The AFV is an infantry killer at short range, when its AP weapon is in range. Infantry carriers, IFVs especially, can engage a tank, but usually have no-move-shoot missiles and weak armor. Keep the IFV behind the hill, spot with troopers, and blast the tank with a heavy ATGM. Once the enemies AFVs are gone, the IFVs can move forward and engage enemy infantry with their main weapons.

The Minbari Firesprite can move 14 inches and still dismount infantry. The Minbari also have the very lethal Assault infantry (these guys fight tanks with sticks; the epitome of the snake-eater). It is possible to conduct a "panzer blitz" assault with them: move the Firesprite to contact with an enemy vehicle, and then dismount the assault infantry ON the enemy vehicle. While the Firesprite cannot initiate close combat, the infantry can, and the Firesprite can assist in the close combat. Only a few vehicles have weapons with a long enough "short" range to stop such an attack (Odin, Loki, Hexus, Shriek, and Windsword. Shriek and Windsword are Minbari.) Other specific infantry tactics will appear in future articles.



EVERYONE knows the story. Everyone knows about the disastrous first contact we had with the Minbari. Well, at least, the first military contact with the Minbari.

Rumors have it that other humans had seen Minbari before, but you know how rumors are. However, this one did have some merit. I am a doctor. Well, in a way. I wanted to travel around, and look at other places. So, I sold my services to ships in exchange for free rides, and of course currency for food, etc.

But, this would be unlike any other event I had known. I was on board a cargo liner when I first met them. The liner received a distress call from what they were calling themselves: a Minbari Transport. The captain informed me, and asked if I knew who the Minbari were. I did not at that time. He took a chance, and went in to help a distressed ship. He's done this several times before, but this time, he had a doctor with him. Me.

We managed to get communication after several minutes, but it was a struggle. The transport had incredible sensor systems, sweeping over us as good as any warship could. The captain had his hand on the defense system, but he told us of their problem quickly after. They had a power fluctuation, a big one. Something had overloaded in the ship's reactor, and they needed medical assistance and an evacuation of people and cargo. There were no ships of their kind in the area, so they sent out a wide distress signal in hopes that anyone could help. The captain agreed, and told me to start getting people into the emergency cargo area. He always had an area reserved for this situation, and I always questioned this until now.

I was on the first shuttle to the Minbari ship, because I was the doctor, and because the captain asked me to. Minbari physiology was not that different from a human's, apart from the bone-like crown on the back of their head. They were also a little shorter than the average human, but as they tell me later, they live to be a lot older.

I started to treat the more obvious wounds: bleeding and burns with basic medical equipment (bandages), I didn't want to try liquid forms, because of unknown reactions to chemicals. I later found out



FIRST CONTACT

By ROB GREEN

that that was a good idea, based on reactions to some of the components. Most of the people weren't too badly injured. I assumed the ones that were closest to the blast didn't stand a chance anyways. As we went back to the ship, I began doing scans on them to study their anatomical layout, and began working out a plan for finishing treatment.

A rare first contact situation for most, but this was how I lived. To learn about other races and other people, so it wasn't too much different from what I was used to. Normally, the captain would travel to a nearby base, where we would transfer off the victims. But, I knew this would be different.

The people were slightly xenophobic, that I could tell. After a while, we began to interact more openly. I learned about their culture, and what they were doing out

there. They had a caste system, and you were born into one of three castes. The people we rescued were part of the Worker Caste, the largest of the three. This caste did all the labor, and all the transportation on cargo ships. The Religious Caste were the temple managers and the spiritual leaders of their people. And the Warrior Caste were the primary fighters, although all three castes had warships of their own. We learned many things about the Minbari, "we" meaning the crew, myself included.

As a celebration of being fully healed, the captain gave the head Minbari a drink. Nothing happened at first, but then he went wild, and nearly ended up being shot by the captain. I assume it was a reaction to the alcohol, and I did my best to calm him down. It was a good thing I didn't use the liquid bandages, as they have alcohol to sterilize

the wounds before patching.

The captain, before the drink, asked if he could use the communications array to contact a Minbari ship to take them to a proper base, as they wanted to avoid contact with more outsiders. He managed to contact a Minbari Tug, another Worker Caste ship, as he was unsure of the reaction a warrior might have to their rescue, and they arranged a meeting place in a few

days. That gave me a few days to learn more about their way of life.

They do not have much of a monetary system. The workers provide for both religious and warrior. What little money they have is used in barter between their "protectorate worlds", systems that the Minbari protect because they do not have the money to build a space fleet of their own. They don't deal much with outsiders, and kept referring to their great Minbari Leader "Valen". The Minbari described their cities as best they could, somehow they "grow" the crystal spires, and they expand over hundreds, even thousands of years. Many of the other things I learned cannot be explained in simple words.

At the pickup point, they took the shuttles we loaded for them, and left for the pickup. I had never really seen an undamaged Minbari ship. It was beautiful. The blues kind of hued together, and then you knew what they meant by crystal spires. It's almost as if you went to a dig site, and found some pure gems. It's like the ship was made out of these gems, and the starlight refracted off the ship in different ways.

So, now we are at war with the Minbari. Their beautiful ships now glow with the fire of war, and are just as deadly as they are bright. And quite invincible too. Earthforce wants this information so they can develop biological weapons against the Minbari. Although they are the enemy, I am a doctor, not a madman. I was sent to heal, and not destroy. I will not let them take this. I'm destroying all the originals, and keeping this in hiding where no one can find it, just in case I ever need to write something important. Probably never, as I will be jailed for life once Earthforce sees what I've done.

Signed,
Dr. Steven Franklin



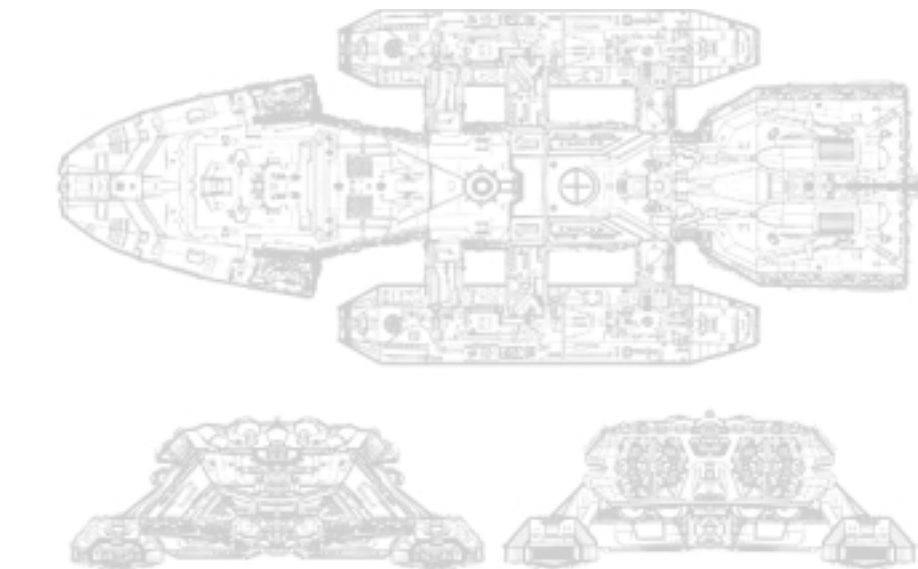
By TODD BOYCE

I'VE ALWAYS been a fan of the show Battlestar Galactica (BG) and thought I'd make some SCSs for Babylon 5 Wars for fun. At least that's how it all began. It's grown quite a bit since then and at this point I don't know how far I'll take it. This has been a side project for me for the last two years and will probably remain as a work in progress for quite some time to come.

Aside from a few more ships and facilities, Fleet Action and Gropos conversions are next on the horizon along with a campaign guide (and possibly miniatures as well).

Who cares? Besides myself there's a handful of people that are using the ships occasionally and having fun with them, there's a lot more people that like the designs I've come up with and have started to incorporate them into fan fiction, RPGs and their own game conversions. Also some computer graphics artists are making CG models and putting them into their artwork. I've even heard a rumor that production personnel of the new Battlestar Galactica series (which will be airing next year sometime) have also taken a look. There has been enough interest to keep me going and every email I get pushes my motivation to do more.

In the beginning... I didn't care for the initial SCSs I made since they had a mishmash of B5W weapons and my own and it didn't have a nice appearance or feel like the show. As I did more and more research into what little information was available, I found a renewed interest in the show and a dedication to make the ships as accurate as I could (and keep them playable). I scoured the internet and 20 year old magazine articles for technical information, picked apart episodes, sometimes a frame at a time trying to



glean even the tiniest details that might give me a clue about the capabilities of the ships and tried to come up with explanations of the shoddy jargon displayed on technical readouts and used as script filler. I also joined mailing lists and various other resources to poke and prod the fanatics to see what would and would not be acceptable. These ships are not only under the scrutiny of B5W players but of the entire BG community as well.

It's bad enough arguing about whether a Primus has battle lasers or not, with BG there is almost no official technical information and what little there is most often is contradicted in either the show or other official sources. The flame wars and arguments run rampant. You think B5 is bad, try taking a show that has very little regard to science and physics in the first place (What else has Larson made? Automan ...

Knight Rider ... Buck Rogers in the 25th Century ... you get the drift) and add to that a total lack of official information, pile on the fanatical fans and the B5W uber patrol, toss in the wretched Galactica 1980 series and shake vigorously. It's such a mess I sometimes wonder why I ever bothered.

Not a simple task... Along the line I finally decided to take it upon myself to define most of the ambiguous information that's out there and fill in the gaps with my own ideas of how that universe operates. If people disagree, fine, that's the nature of the beast. I've seen AOG go through the same hardships and I've got thick skin.

The first hurdle to overcome was determining the size of a Battlestar. Without that knowledge it becomes extremely difficult to determine whether it should be an Enormous Unit or a



MCV in B5W. This may sound easy but this is an issue that has been continuously debated, argued, and flamed over since the show aired. The final results of the research into the physical size of the Galactica is publicly available on my site. To summarize though, there are three main sources of size figures; the model kit and an old "official" magazine article that states the length to be 2000ft, the recently released DVD and quotes from Larson that says a mile long, and visual effects personnel and other "official" magazine articles that say several miles long. To settle the debate I looked at the actual visual effects shots and performed careful measurements to yield the results found on the page. Ultimately decided I was going to go with the mile long (6080 ft) measurement.

Then, naturally, I proceeded to determine weapon capabilities. Back in the days of practical models and optical effects there were more severe limits to what the vfx companies could do and what the production could afford to do. The same shots are used over and over in order to save money, which of course leads to the conundrum of how to explain it in at least a somewhat logical way. One energy bolt flying across the screen was used to represent missiles, lasers and even the Ravoshol laser (a weapon capable of destroying the Galactica in a single shot). The same shot of a turret was implied to be a missile launcher, an anti-fighter defense turret and a main capital ship weapon. You can begin to see the problems. I looked long and hard at weapon placements, damage done, and overall capability and tried to compromise on screen sources with print sources so that it stayed pretty close to everything I've found and only putting limits on things that disturb game balance issues.

I resolved many of these issues by a combination of fluff text and game mechanics to create weapon systems and arsenals that were different but generally not any more or less effective (despite many people's first impressions) than most normal B5W weapons and ships. The Solenite missile is very powerful but limited by a small magazine and minimal deployment, the Pulsar Lasers are flexible but not long ranged, the turbolasers are excellent at wiping out fighters but on average are less effective than SPBs against ships. Most of all, I've tried to emulate

the show at the same time as keeping the power level the same as B5W.

That's done...now what?... Once I finished the initial versions of the Battlestar, Base Star, Raider and Viper I asked myself "now what?" Well, there were the Rag Tag Fleet ships which mostly comprised of freighters and liners. I made a few but started to get bored since they weren't very interesting, they'd probably never get used and there was little to no information on them. Then I recalled during my research there was another Cylon ship that was displayed in a war book in the series pilot that matched an early Ralph McQuarrie illustration of the Base Star. I dubbed it a War Star and made a SCS as a smaller version of the Base Star.

Liking how that turned out, I decided I'd fill out the fleet lists of both the Cylon and Colonial forces. I was on a roll at this point, I had many of the weapon icons made and the SCSs were looking pretty slick so it seemed like it would be fairly easy to do. I doodled some pictures at work and came up with a few designs and proceeded to make some of them.

At this point I had started getting some favorable feedback and even a playtest report or two. I made some tweaks to the designs and seeing that there were actually people out there interested in these ships, I kept going. More ships -> more feedback -> more motivation -> more ships -> more feedback...where will it end?

I'm no longer just making some SCS conversions, at this point I'm building an entire BG universe from the initial scraps that were available and my own imagination.

The results... I've had fun working on "Battlestar Galactica Wars" and my hope is that others have some fun using the designs. I think the Cylon and Colonial ships are pretty well balanced with each other and when I get around to it, I will adjust the point values to make them more usable with B5W races (reduce the BG ship costs by about 20% for the time being). I'm looking forward to the new series and I will be trying to keep up with everything that happens in it.

You can find these conversions and other B5W related items on my website: Battle Spoo <http://ravensbranch.tripod.com/battlespoo.html>



STARHOUND VIPER

THE VIPER is an interceptor capable of both space and atmospheric combat. It is the primary fighter craft employed by the Colonial fleet. A standard Viper is 29 feet (8.85 meters) in length and carries one pilot.

Weapons consist of Laser-Torpedo guns and hardpoints under each wing that can carry one missile each.

Vipers are powered by a hybrid reactor system that includes a Tylum energizer with a single 1,570.8 cm³ fuel cell and two Fusion reactors. These systems combined have an output of 200 Terajoules and provides the Viper with power for life support, weapons, engines and all ship systems. This power pack gives a Viper the ability to sustain space travel for nearly two weeks if necessary.

Vipers have three Ion engines, providing the ship with a maximum acceleration of 110.25 m/s² and a speed greater than Mach-3 in atmosphere. Vipers use liquid mercury fuel for their Ion engines, stored in the wings and two internal fuel tanks. Turbo boost is accomplished by dumping and igniting solonite plasma along with the ion exhaust. Once "Turbo" is engaged the Viper becomes the fastest Sub-Light fighter in space.

Vipers also employ a form of Ram-Scoop/Jet Intake system, that processes particles in space and within the atmosphere of planets, hydrogen in particular, and turns it into usable fuel for the Fusion engines.

The Viper cockpit is pressurized and, in the event of catastrophic system damage, the entire cockpit module can detach and eject - allowing the pilot to survive for three days. Viper variants include a two-seat version for reconnaissance, as well as an unarmed type that employs an advanced A.I. system and engines capable of expelling ion particles at near light speed.

- www.tecr.com/galactica/index.html

NEAL



FOR GROPOS By Alex Roberts

First encountered by humans on the rim world of Acheron, due to the greed of the Bio-National Corporation and the short sightedness of a South American cult, the Aliens succeeded in infecting the populace of Earth, spreading within a year to covering the entire planet. Those who could escape did, though this ended up being mostly the rich who could afford transport off-planet, and the Military, who controlled the bulk of interstellar transport vessels.

It is not known where the Aliens themselves come from. A Hiveworld has been found, and inhabiting there was a high level Queen. However, it is entirely possible that this planet was just another world infected by the Aliens, and their true planet of origin lies far off in space. Some scientists even speculate that the Aliens were a failed biowar experiment by another Alien race. As their proof they site the Aliens survivability in outer

space, as well as other significant combat and defensive mechanisms that are hard to attribute to evolution.

Although Aliens are not particularly bright, with most Drones testing hardly higher than dogs in IQ tests, some Queens have been captured with IQ's well over 200. In addition, during the fighting on Earth, it was observed that later birthings of Aliens were found to be significantly smarter and better adapted to hiding from human hunter-killer teams. Because of this fact, Alien units may be purchased at differing levels of experience. Though they cannot gain experience as a human would, experiences can be bred into them by their Queen, making them more effective against their opponents.

Queen: The Queen is the heart and soul of the hive, controlling all of her progeny through psychic messages. Though they typically do not engage in combat, when they do they are powerful opponents. Each hive has a Queen, and it is not

uncommon for rival Queens and their forces to fight over territory or resources.

Regal Queen: These Queens are extremely rare. Only one has been seen by humans, taken from an Alien Hiveworld and brought to Earth in order to concentrate all local Aliens in the Pacific Northwest for nuclear termination. These special Queens are enormous, and other Queens of their same pheromone line follow the Regal Queen's commands.

Warrior (Drone): These are the most commonly seen Aliens, grown from a human or humanoid host. They are the stuff of nightmares, and are relentless on the attack. They serve their Queen unflinchingly, gathering food, hosts, building the hive, or defending the Queen against attack.

Animal Drone: These are Aliens berthed from smaller animals. This is usually large dogs or smaller herd animals such

as Lambs of even Cows, but can be any animal of sufficient size found on Earth. Though not as strong as a Drone berthed from a human, they are fast, and remain very deadly opponents.

Royal Guard: Not found in every hive, some Queens breed these Aliens to be the ultimate bodyguard. They are faster, stronger and larger than regular humanoid drones, and are extremely powerful in combat.

Special Rules:

Toxic Blood: The blood of the Aliens is extremely toxic. Capable of eating through solid metal their blood makes facing the Aliens in close combat a dicey proposition even if enough firepower can be brought to bear to kill these monsters. If an Alien stand takes damage in close combat, roll a d10 for each non-vehicle stand in close combat. On a 7-10, that stand was splashed with acid blood from the killed Aliens. Each of these stands must take an immediate (additional) attack at CC rating 4 and crew die d6.

Morale: The Aliens follow their Queen without hesitation. They fight and die without a second thought as to their own existence. If trapped, an Alien will unflinchingly give his life to allow his acid blood to create an opening for his brethren.

Alien stands are immune to any Pin or Morale tests. They are considered to automatically pass any they are required to take.

They can only be destroyed by bringing a stand's damage points to 0.

In addition, due to their relentless nature, all Alien units count as Spirited, regardless of their level of experience.

Close Combat: Some Alien units have 2 Close Combat factors. The first is used against infantry, and the second against units with an armor value. Although Aliens are very strong, capable of ripping through steel doors, they are not as well equipped for anti-vehicle combat as regular human armed forces.

TO&E ALIENS:

Alien Hive:

Background: The below TO&E is typical of hive forces.

HQ Section Choice Alpha (Max 1 HQ):
1 Queen

HQ Section Choice Bravo (Max 1 HQ):
1 Regal Queen

Support Unit Alpha (Max 2 support units total):

4 Royal Guard

Alpha Platoon:
8 Warriors (Drones)

Bravo Platoon:
4 Animal Drones

Costs:

HQ Choice A: 12/24/36/50 H Q

Choice B: 15/30/45/65

Support Choice A: 48/96/144/200

Alpha Platoon: 80/160/240/330

Bravo Platoon: 40/80/120/170

Alien Attack Force:

Background: The below TO&E is typical of Alien forces sent out to attack enemies, be they non-Alien or rogue Queens, or to gather food/hosts. Queens rarely join these forces, though if the hive is moving to a new location it is possible that a Queen would be present.

HQ Section Choice Alpha (Max 1 HQ):
2 Warriors

HQ Section Choice Bravo (Max 1 HQ):
1 Queen
2 Royal Guard

Support Unit Alpha (Max 2 support units total)
2 Animal Drones (Note: These drones have heightened senses. They may re-roll any spot checks)

Alpha Platoon:
8 Warriors (Drones)

Bravo Platoon:
8 Animal Drones

Costs:

HQ Choice A: --/40/60/65

HQ Choice B: 36/72/108/150

Support Choice A: 22/44/66/70

Alpha Platoon: 80/160/240/330 Bravo

Platoon: 80/160/240/330

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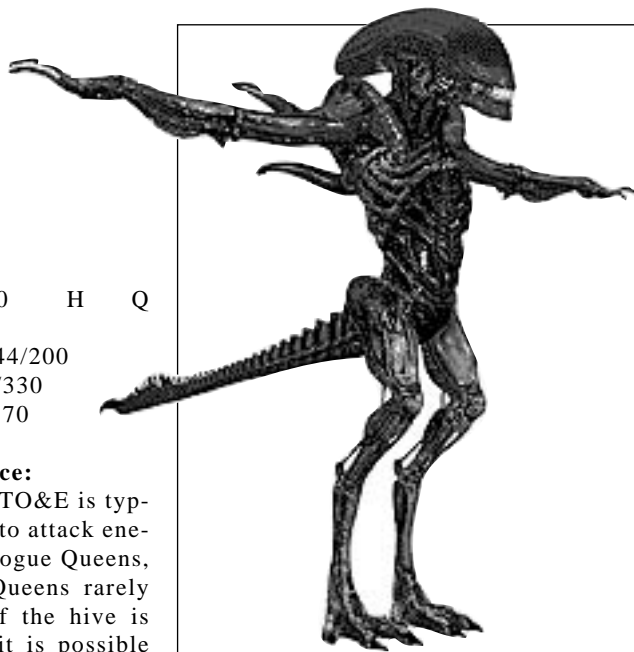
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ALIEN WARRIOR

*"They mostly come out at night.
Mostly." -*

Rebecca, Aliens, The Movie.

The Warrior Alien is likely to be bred in large numbers during the initial stages of a hive's creation.

These short-lived but incredibly fast and strong creatures are controlled by the hive-mind. They operate in concert, with very little in the way of communications problems or tactical awareness.

Their extra-sensory communications - analogous only to that of ants - allows the queen to sense what each of her soldiers see. This results in an a tactical response time far in advance of the centralised telemetry received by Marine lieutenants.

However, a warrior alien is likely to be driven insane once separated from the hive mind. It's ability to rationalise has been seen to be impaired, though its killing instincts remain effective.

Once the area around a hive has been "pacified" and all threats eliminated, the numbers of the warriors would drop off significantly to a stable and sustainable number of "guards".

Warriors are believed to be genetic variations of Drones bred to optimise their combat characteristics.

Normal Drones, such as the Nurses seen protecting the hive in Aliens, are by no means weak. They just have a different primary purpose.

Warriors have heightened senses, greater exoskeleton armour and greater strength. Their endurance, however, is likely to be limited.

The 7ft Alien seen in the movie Alien is considered to have been a Warrior.

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The challenge that was the Ch'Lonas



The Ch'Lonas
by Roman Pernier

WHEN I had my first contact with the Ch'Lonas in B5W, it was with the old SOTM. And I hated it. For one, I already had a picture of an "Es'Kahsi Destroyer" from the now-defunct "The Babylon Project RPG"; for another, the ship was just too weird with its wacky "armor-sheath" and 270° mega-arc nose Assault Laser. So when I was offered to work on making the Ch'Lonas, I immediately started to voice my objections and mentioned the picture from TBP. Nobody else seemed to have seen it, so I uploaded it for the rest of the group.

The picture shows a ship with two side-mounted outrigger-style pods, which seemed to have gun ports on their fore ends. I thought that could be the "special" of the Ch'Lonas - pod mounted big guns. Then we got the ship and weapon ideas from on high, and discussed them. The Matter Stream was dropped almost immediately and replaced with the Matter Cannon (which is a Centauri weapon that's surprisingly not used by any other race yet, though everyone and their uncle had Assault Lasers). The "X-Ray Laser" got changed into "Strike Laser" to avoid problems with conflicting information from the old and almost forgotten, but still official and declared-canon, Sierra "Guide to B5" CD-ROM, which mentions that the Heavy Laser is an X-Ray based laser.

I kept mentioning the TBP design, and how I would do a Ch'Lonas fleet based on it, and Ben liked the idea of a modular design better than the AoG SOTM. So I decided to make a "showcase SCS" for my Es'Kahsi DD idea, a small HCV, with two side-mounted pods. To avoid problems with the pod placement, I chose a Drazi-style side layout for this HCV (if it was fore/aft I would have been troubled as to where to put the pods - which should be hittable from both front and aft; the side layout killed that problem before it could arise). I consulted the

weapon list I got from Ben, and decided on giving them a nice mix - one Assault Laser and one Matter Cannon for each pod, together with a standard hull-mounted Twin Array suite for fighter defense thereby giving them a nice mix for every range.

Now the big question was - how to represent the pods in game terms? First I thought about just adding a "Connecting Pylon" to the Hit Location chart, and make it like the "Connection Strut" - a hit there applies its damage to all pod-mounted guns. Other people thought it better to just use the "Connection Strut" rules (which was voted down as the cases were too different) or just make all pod-mounted weapons vulnerable to criticals (which wasn't the "lucky hit can blow the whole pod off" effect we needed) or make the pylon a separate icon. I liked the last one so I thought a bit more about it - here's what I came up with: the pylon is like a substructure on which the pod is mounted; if it's destroyed the pod falls off after weapons fire just like a side when it's structure is gone. Pylon overkill goes to structure, and if the pylon is damaged but not destroyed all pod-mounted weapons have to roll for criticals representing damage to their power feed lines, which run through the pylon.

Then I redid my Es'Kahsi to the new specifications, and made a few other SCS while I was at it. They were rather well received, so I made more. Then we thought about saving room by putting several versions on one SCS; so I took a peek at the style of

WotCR's refit boxes and redid all SCS anew, this time combining some which were two SCS before into one, and adding more variants to others wherever possible (on some ships we simply ran out of room). We still had to do some tweaking (like disallowing instant scouts by stating Elint pods can't just be slapped on, and playing with a few weapon stats for the Laser Pulsar and Strike Laser), but basically the Ch'Lonas big ships were finished.
