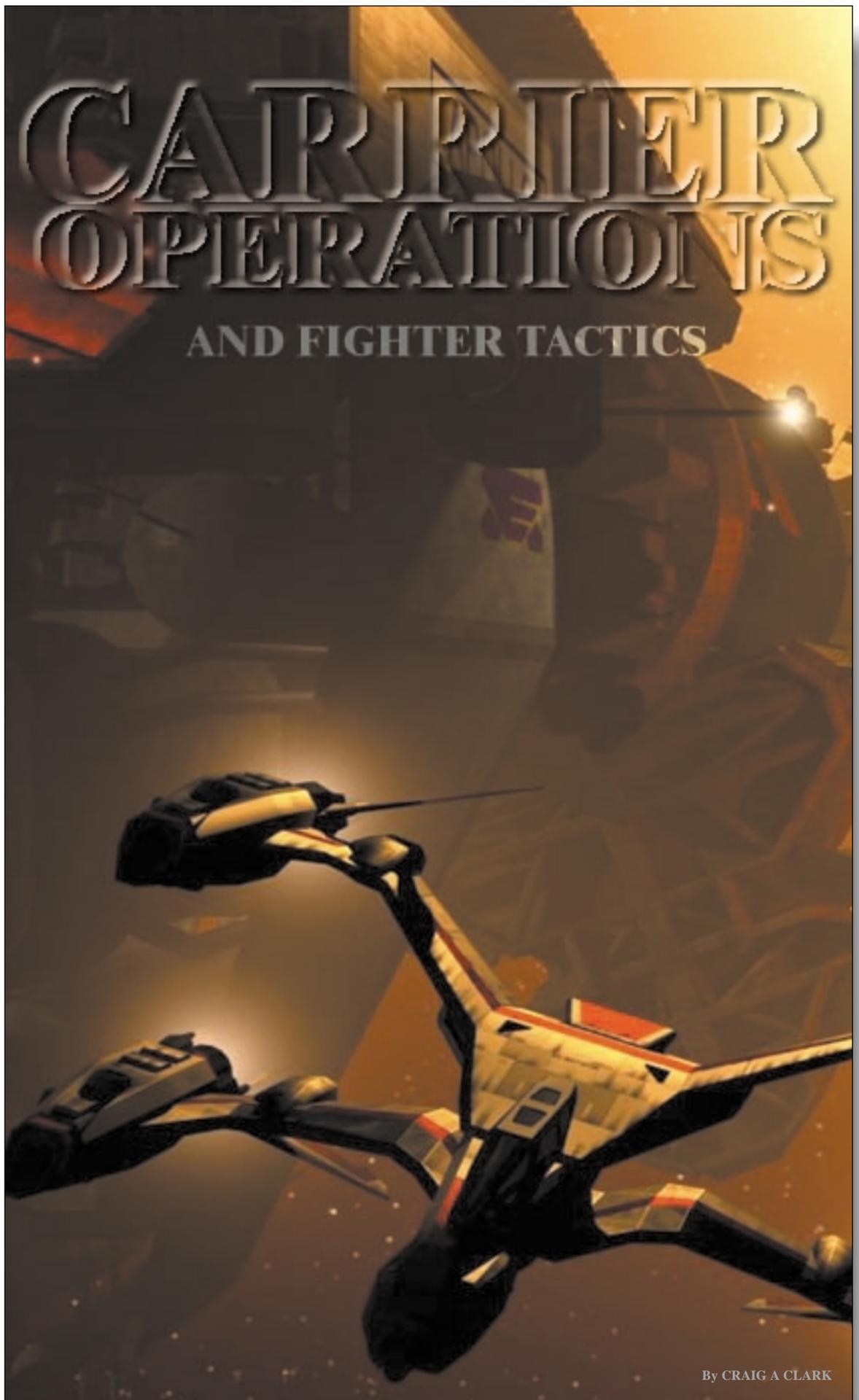


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BABYLON 5 WARS * GROPOS * FLEET ACTION



By CRAIG A CLARK



Inside: official playtest for the Walkers, from Matt Plonski's upcoming War of the Ancients

Effect versus Ego

The debate continues: are carriers better than battleships?

FLEET commanders were slow to perceive the potential of small fighter-type craft to enhance the striking power of their forces. But during the past 100 years, the Dilgar war, the Minbari War and the Earth Civil War have all demonstrated the awesome flexibility and power of fleet carrier units - and their fighters.

Originally, fighters were little more than intelligence gathering probes. Establishing the enemy's position in the vastness of space is incredibly difficult. Deploying a large number of small, but effective, sensors was the most efficient way of expanding a Task Group's sensor envelope. Once an enemy was detected, these "scouts" would do little more than sit back and observe as the battlewagons lumbered in and clobbered the enemy with their big guns.

Defending fleet commanders soon recognised they had to prevent these probes from finding their ships, or at least stop them from gathering too much data.

Fast enough to stay outside capital ship firing ranges, the only effective means of disposing of this enemy was to send out another tiny craft.

Thus the requirements for a fleet fighter were produced: a nimble craft able to engage enemy reconnaissance craft and protect friendly ones from attack.

Space-based fighter combat was born.

Parent Ships

From the beginning of space naval combat, ships would carry a varying number of shuttlecraft to carry crew, mail and supplies between vessels and bases. Fighters simply displaced some of these utilitarian craft.

While initially this was enough, the demand for more and more of these little combat craft soon outgrew simple utilitarian hangar bays.

The ideal carrier was considered to be a fast ship with a long endurance to allow it to be deployed quickly for long periods. A large hull capacity to allow the carrying of a reasonable number of fighters was also desirable.

But these requirements conflicted with naval doctrine. Speed and volume make it harder to protect a ship with adequate armor and weaponry. Endurance takes up even more space and weight in the form of supplies.

Many commanders balked at the thought of large, lightly protected, hyperspace-capable hangars. Such craft had no place in a fleet built around the dreadnought... Instead, they preferred squeezing fighters into hulls that were primarily designed to get in close and dirty with the enemy. It is an option full of compromises. As a result, exactly what type of ship is regarded as optimal for fighter carrying is the product of an individual nation's combat doctrine.

Dreadnought Fever

Many "old school" commanders regard it as impudence that someone would even consider attacking them with small, fragile gnats. Some appear to believe fighters are a mere nuisance



sance that, if you ignore them, will go away. They don't.

Hordes of fast moving, unarmored, horseback archers massacred lumbering Christian knights during the Crusades. A single biplane was able to bring the battleship Bismark to its knees at the outbreak of World War II. Later, overwhelming swarms of US fighters and torpedo bombers smashed the Japanese fleet.

This principal of fast, overwhelming numbers of small but accurately placed attacks holds true even for space combat. It's one that threatens the very existence of the dreadnought.

Death by a thousand paper-cuts may be ignoble. But it is unfortunately real.

Interceptors, Heavy Arrays, pulse cannons and a variety of other weapons have been developed or pressed into service for the anti-fighter role.

Most are effective against small and moderate groups of fighters. But when a massive carrier-borne strike approaches, there are simply too many targets to take down before they close within range.

No anti-fighter gun can prevent this. Only escort fighters offer significant protection.

The one truly effective means of defence is attack: destroying the enemy's carrier before it can deploy its vicious cargo.

Carrier Roles

Trade protection: Convoys are, almost by definition, vulnerable. There are lots of them, stretching available escorts thinly. The best option in a long-term campaign is to strategically position a carrier where it's fighters can cover the space between jumpgates, bases and planets. A small escort is usually sufficient to hold raiders at bay while the defenders wait for the carrier strike wing to arrive. These same fighters can be used to hunt down raiders before they break into the shipping lanes and do damage.

Power projection: Fighters have a reasonable range, even in space. They can be sent off alone to attack convoys, space stations, jump-gates and enemy fleets. The carrier group can sit back,

using distance as a buffer between it and danger. Some fighter types can even enter atmospheres to assist ground forces. This is a mark of the flexibility of the carrier fighter wing, and another demonstration of its great power.

Fleet defence: Like an onion, a successful Task Force needs several layers of defence. The first is its fighter escort. This can be provided by both fleet carriers and combat carriers and is flexible enough to switch from attack to defence very quickly. Fighters provide a large envelope which needs to be pierced before attacking squadrons of ships can successfully engage. Doing this is not easy, and is usually achieved through two carrier fighter wings engaging decisively before each side's ships move in. However, a decisive victory by one side can leave the other vulnerable to fighter attack. The attacking commander, in this circumstance, would be stupid to risk his own capital ships in a slugfest rather than send in the fighters for one final strike.

Carrier Supremacy

Carriers do not have the same level of dominance that their water-based cousins did in the 20th and 21st centuries. Space-based fighters simply do not have the endurance necessary to be omnipotent in the vastness of space. Carriers have to bring their cargoes close - in space-based terms - to the enemy before they can be deployed.

Mother ships find it much more difficult to "stand off" from the main battle. Though super-carriers such as the Poseideon are designed to do this, modern medium combat vessels can skirt around the main battle fleet and attack the vulnerable but extremely valuable carrier.

Thus the debate continues to rage: Should fighter complements be a small, homogenous force within a front-line dreadnought? Or should larger numbers be placed aboard a vulnerable dedicated Carrier? The debate continues to rage.

From super to escort: defining the roles of fighter-carrying ships

By SCOTT McGAFFIN

Supercarrier: A massive dedicated* carrier capable of bringing 5 or more squadrons of fighters to battle. These monsters form the core of a fleet or battlegroup. They are some of the most valuable ships in known space. Only three classes of supercarriers have ever been constructed: the EA Poseidon, Brakiri Lykorai and the Dilgar Mishakur-B. And out of these three, only the Poseidon was built from scratch as a supercarrier.

Fleet carrier: Also called a heavy carrier. A large dedicated* carrier capable of bringing 3-4 squadrons of fighters to a battle. Can be used to form the core of a battlegroup. Because of the resources involved, this is generally the best class of carrier a race will have.

Examples include the EA Avenger, Minbari Morshin, Brakiri Cidikar and Dilgar Garasoch.

Medium carrier: A dedicated* carrier capable of carrying 2-3 squadron of fighters.

Examples of this class include the Centauri Balvarin, Narn T'Rann and Abbai Miliani.

Battle carrier: A carrier that carries 1-2 squadron of fighters to be used in conjunction with the ship's firepower. Usually possess good offensive firepower. Examples of this class would include the Omega, Primus, Sharlin, G'Quan, Nova, Bin'Tak and Ocuturion.

Escort carrier: Usually a smaller ship type that uses its firepower and small fighter contingent to protect a larger, more valuable ship such as a battleship/dreadnought or fleet carrier. They almost always carry a single fighter flight. Examples of this class would be a EA Hyperion, Minbari Esharan, Centauri Altarian and Narn G'Karith.

Light carrier: A smaller carrier used to carry a small number of fighters (usually 1 squadron) either to protect itself or to supplement its smaller firepower. Examples would include the Centauri Amar, Brakiri Brikorta, EA Hermes, Narn Var'Nic and Pak'ma'ra Ar'tees. Most Raider ships fall into this category.

*A dedicated carrier is a ship who's sole purpose is to carry and service fighters. Most have average to good close in defenses and poor offensive capabilities.

THE carrier gives a player the ability to project offensive power away from their own ships, bases and other facilities. They also provide a cheap (at least economically) means of waging war without having to rely solely on fleets of large, expensive (money, personnel and resource wise) warships. Some races, such as the Pak'ma'ra, merely dabble in carrier power, whereas others, like the EA, base the core of their military might around carriers. Carriers come in all sizes from the lowly escort carrier up to the massive supercarrier. For defining carriers and their roles, I'll use the designations outlined to the right.

You may be thinking that certain classes of ships say in their name that they're a heavy carrier such as the Narn T'Rann or a battle carrier such as the Drazi Strikehawk, so why am I reclassifying them? I've done this to create a standard to identify fighter-carrying ships and the roles in which they should generally be used. One race's heavy carrier is another races light carrier. Keep this in mind when looking at each carrier. Some carriers don't fit into a class perfectly. The big four main races were used as a general baseline for this classification.

A carrier's designation generally defines how it should be used in battle. In a simple pick-up game where the only goal is to be the last man standing, the tactics are simple: dump your fighters, and then race into the fray, carrier and all. Who cares if you lose your supercarrier, it doesn't mean anything after the battle. But in a campaign, it's a whole different ball game. This essay will assume we're playing a campaign.

Supercarriers are massive ships, and to build these ships requires a lot of money and resources. These are not ships to be squandered on little border skirmishes or chasing Raiders. The arrival of a supercarrier on a battlefield can be a signal that an offensive is about to be undertaken. The supercarrier and its fighter contingent alone can be a match for a small enemy squadron of ships.

But there lies the problem. Never, ever send a supercarrier off by itself somewhere. It must have escorts. It should have at least 2 anti-fighter escorts and at least 2 or 3 anti-warship escorts. A supercarrier should never come under enemy fire and if it does, it should be very brief. It should never be situated right up at the battlefield, the proper place for it is far back in the fleet, out of harm's way. Any unit trying to get at the supercarrier should have to go through the player's main combat units and then through the supercarrier's escorts. Don't go up to the front lines to launch your fighters and then pull back. Launch them from the rear. The reasons for this are twofold. First, it protects the valuable supercarrier as the fighters are more expendable than the ship carrying them. It's far better that they (the fighters) weather any enemy fire approaching the front than their carrier. And second, if launched from the back, it will take at least one turn for the fight-

ers to get up into the main battle. This will give them a chance to rid themselves of their initiative penalty received from being newly launched. You don't want to start your fighters off immediately right in the heat of battle with a -10 initiative penalty.

Next up is the fleet carrier. The fleet carrier should be used in the same general fashion that the supercarrier is used. Even though it generally takes less resources to build a fleet carrier, they're still extremely valuable ships and should be escorted accordingly. A fleet carrier should have an escort of at least 1 anti-fighter ship and 2 anti-warship vessels.

The medium carrier is generally the smallest class of dedicated carrier and since it is a dedicated carrier, for it to survive it should generally keep away from heavy combat, although the loss of one usually isn't too devastating to a fighter heavy race. For races that don't heavily rely on fighters, the medium carrier is pretty much the best dedicated carrier they have access to and should be protected accordingly. An escort for these ships would probably be comprised of 1 anti-fighter and 1 anti-warship vessel.

The battle carrier is probably the most common form of carrier in the B5 universe. As stated previously the battle carrier uses its fighter complement to supplement its existing firepower, which is usually considerable. That's supplement not rely on. As these ships are always right in the thick of battle, it would be wise for them to launch their fighters as soon as possible. In the event of destruction of the hangar bay or even destruction of the ship, you do not want to lose your fighters before they've even fired a shot. Do this especially if your ship is a 'fire magnet', like the EA Warlock tends to be. Usually battle carriers don't need escorts unless they are a large, important warship such as a battleship or dreadnought. And if they do need an escort, usually any smaller class of multi-role warship will suffice such as an EA Hyperion.

The role of the escort carrier is just like its name suggests. It's a smaller carrier that uses itself and its fighter complement as an escort for a bigger, more important ship. Launch your fighters immediately! This ship's job is to take out any enemy ships attacking the ship it's escorting and to absorb fire meant for said ship, so this carrier and its fighters will probably take a pounding. Ships of this type shouldn't be sent off by themselves as their overall firepower tends to be geared for close-in work.

The light carrier is very similar to the escort carrier in the number of fighters carried, but their roles are quite different. Whereas the escort carrier escorts bigger ships, the light carrier is far more independent. The role of its fighter complement can vary widely from protecting the ship during an attack run to intercepting an enemy patrol to attacking enemy ships themselves. The fighter type carried will of course help define the fighter's mission.

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Passing of angels

By **BEN RUBERY**

Based on the Tirrith Turkey Shoot scenario by Alex Kettle

AND they sat in the departure lounge, waiting to be scrambled. Some of them were almost old men, the rest barely out of their teens. War had accounted for the middle generation, leaving the raw recruits and reservists to fill most of the pilot slots. And they waited. The Minbari would be attacking Earth anyday now, and they waited to die like every other force sent against the Minbari. Some had come back alive, and a small victory had been won, but most of the men and women who'd gone against the Minbari in battle were dead, their bodies lost to the night.

And every pilot here knew it. And knew there would be no retreat this time.

So they sat around and killed time before time killed them.

They told stories. Stories of past victories and defeats. But all of them stories of survival.

One veteran, sat on an off white bench, cleared his throat. The rookies paid him all the more attention as he'd told the story of the Battle of Omelos the day before, and he was the only one of the pilots in the lounge who'd fought through the whole Dilgar war, the conflict that had made the EA as a galactic power.

"Before Omelos," he started. "There were other great battles. I could tell you about Balos, but that one is a story I've heard so many times I'm sick of it, and I was there. Here's one that has been forgotten...."

Tirrith had been a jewel in the crown of the Vree Merchants guild for years before the Dilgar came, and when they did, it was just as important to their war effort as it had been to the Vree.

Now at the time we were sitting there allowing our supplies and reinforcements to catch us up, and to pull together our forces before the next big push. But that didn't mean we sat around growing beer guts, we kept the Dilgar on their toes, and they did the same with us.

And one way we did that was precision strikes against Dilgar targets across the front. The Fighter construction yard at Tirrith was such an inviting target.

It was based on a Vree facility, and the Vree wanted it back, and thought a precision strike to the command module would be enough to put it beyond Dilgar use, but recoverable by the Vree



Fiction

after the war.

So there we were, sitting in a briefing room on the Brakiri Devaskar carrier Shada (because it had AG and we all needed some time in a g-field, even if it was Brakiri and not Earth standard), a big room of pilots, with ships commanders either present or linked in. Rear Admiral Warner was in charge of the group. He was stood in the middle, a pair of Vree captains next to him, and a Markab. The Descari didn't like to mix with aliens, and they were linked in on screens, the transmission was light flash so no one could listen in.

The plan was simple. We jump in fairly close to the base, the human and Descari fighters engage the defenders, the Brakiri and Vree punch out the command module on the station.

He mentioned we'd been trying to take this base out before, and that command had made the decision to try it with fighters, not ships, as they could spend less time in the hotzone. We all knew it was because fighters are easier to replace than ships. But he didn't insult us with the truth. We all knew we were numbers on commands spreadsheet at that point. We hung out for a bit in the rec room on the Shada, trading anal probe jokes with the Vree pilots. The Vree hadn't got a notion of camp, so when we finally managed to explain the way ensign Hicks was acting, they were rolling on the floor for all of five minutes, before telling us they were laughing at something completely different from what we'd meant.

We were in our fighters a few hours later, ready to drop. I was aboard the Avenger class carrier Yorktown, which was with the Ark Royal, another Avenger, and the Lao Tzu, a Hyperion. We had eleven league ships with us and we were a fairly formidable strike group. There was certainly no shortage of fighters. Or at least that's what we thought. The Dilgar had other plans.

We jumped in and found a fairly big fleet of Dilgar around the base. We thought we could handle them, there were a couple of Garosochs, but the fighter balance was still in our favour.

Until as we closed the Mishakur launched five extra squadrons of fighters it had no business having.

That was when the transmission came in telling us to target the Dilgar carriers and ignore the base. Trying to penetrate the bases defences and fight off fourteen squadrons of Thoruns was too much to ask, and the Rear Admiral knew it. However he knew he could turn it into a victory if he could bag the Dilgar carriers. So we went for them. We had to use fighters as there was no real long range firepower in the whole fleet. On the other hand the Dilgar had a Traharti and Mishakur, so they could play the range game if they wanted.

We had to break down the Dilgar fighters and the best way to do that was to let them come to us. The fighters stayed close in to the ships, and the Dilgar chose to obliquely flank us with their fighters, while pouring in the first volley of long range fire with any certainty of hitting. Some of the Dilgar fighters launched missiles, and the Ark Royal started to take a pasting from them, but the Brakiri Falkosis got the drop on a flight of Thoruns while we faced off the main group, and soon they were expanding gas clouds. The anti-fighter defences started to snake out, and a few LPB and scattergun shots hit, but most of the damage was done by the Vree, who'd focussed their sensor arrays on individual flights of fighters in order to knock them down at range. That being said it was hardly one sided. The Ark Royal took a dozen missiles in the side and lost her fighter bays and weapons on that side, and the Lao Tzu was gutted and drifting crippled in space from long range heavy bolter hits and a fighter strike. With no guns and no sensors it wasn't going anywhere for a while. They may deride heavy bolters now we've got heavy pulse cannons, but if you take one in the sensor array you won't be able to see your nose in front of you face afterwards.

And it went on. We ended up in a gruelling moshing furball that pulled us slowly back towards the Dilgar fleet and the anti-fighter guns the escort ships were starting to train on us.

But luck turned out to be on our side. One of the Markab Romaks managed to push into the dog

- **Continued Page 5**



BASED ON AN IMAGE BY HOLGAR BARTON

- From Page 4

fight, and destroy a flight of Thoruns, as the Descari fighters took on all the Dilgar fighters by head to head. The Dilgar probably thought it best to eliminate the plasma armed fighters before they could hit the carriers, but a squadron realised what was going on and came chasing after us. And then we were through, knocking into the first Garosoch we could get at. The Brakiri and Vree fighters can really be vicious, and soon the first Garosoch was drifting in space.

My squadron and the Falkosis turned round to hit the Dilgar who's followed us, pulling the Bennetts hammer manoeuvre off perfectly to knock them down.

The Descari fighters were virtually wiped out. I know they picked up a couple of lifepods later but none of the fighters were left intact. The Dilgar had taken a beating too though. Eleven Thoruns had taken direct hits from the Descari plasma guns and been vapourised.

Now the Dilgar split their fighter group. Only four flights came after us, the rest converged on the Descari cruiser that was edging the fleets flank forward to try and engage the light Dilgar ships and split their fire between ships and fight-

ers to make sure both survive. Seen it done before, we'll see it done again.

A Tiger flight on my right had gone down in flames due to an Escort Jashakur and it's scatter pulsars, but two squadrons of EA fighters rounded on it and removed all it's forward weapons.

We pressed on towards the other Garosoch. It was at this point the Dilgar decided to pull their fighters back to defend their carriers. The Ark Royal and Descari cruiser had been about to be destroyed, despite some very aggressive anti-fighter fire from the Markab ships, the Vree Ximm, and the Descari destroyer, which had managed to hit a fighter with a medium plasma cannon.

By the time they'd got back, the other Garosoch was a hulk burning silently in space. We'd come in and totalled it before they could pull the escorts around it.

The Dilgar had almost destroyed one of the Vree carriers with heavy bolter fire at that point, but when the furball started around the Mishakur they pulled their ships round it to protect it. It would be a tough nut to crack. So we took on the Dilgar fighters while the Tzymms and Pikitos recharged their weapons. Suddenly the Mishakur took an anti matter cannon hit from the Vree

escort, which had slipped into range, and lost two of it's damnable scatter pulsars, and some stuff that was threatening the ships. We treated it as an opening, and the remaining assault fighters jinked to and fro and pumped fire into the damaged Mishakur. A side came off under the barrage, but enough assault fighters were blown apart to make the fighter strikes we could launch to follow it up pointless.

So when the rear admiral ordered us to break off and head home. We did so gladly. There were less than a two dozen pilots left with working fighters, and we were all damn lucky to have survived.

But we'd beaten them. Losing those two carriers did the Dilgar far more damage than losing a hundred and twenty odd fighters did for us.

Maybe another time I'll tell you about how we finally got the fighter yard."

There was a hiss of the tannoy.

"Is this thing on?"

Maybe he wouldn't.

Daring raid against a Dilgar shipyard

By **ALEXANDER KETTLE**

DURING the year 2232, the Dilgar War had taken a definite turn for the worse for the Dilgar. The Alliance had forced it's way through the League of Non-Aligned worlds and had liberated all but two races. They now stood poised for a final push to finish the job, but first the League needed a breather, and a base was constructed at Comac to resupply and repair the Alliance fleet. In the time spent repairing and resupplying, the Alliance probed the nearby Tirrith system, discovering a Dilgar fighter construction yard. It was decided that the yard should be destroyed, as a forward source of, (and base for), the deadly Dilgar fighters would only cause problems as the attack resumed. After 3 unsuccessful attempts to destroy the yards, the EA admiralty began to grow leery of losing yet more ships on failed attacks. However they were soon convinced (by the Vree- who's facilities it was that had been captured and converted to Dilgar use in the first place) that a precision strike to remove the reactors and control facilities would work (and of course minimize damage to their property). This time however, they would jump a carrier battle group in near the targets, and use the fighters, which, as attrition units, were considered expendable (which they didn't tell the pilots). The attack would use several carriers from different races, but no one race would supply too large a force (the EA contingent being the largest) to minimize casualties should something go wrong. The final plan saw EA and Descari fighters engaging defenders while Brakiri and Vree attack fighters escorted by Brakiri light fighters launched the actual attack. When the Alliance force jumped in, they discovered a Dilgar carrier task force with no less than three carriers, one of them a super carrier, taking on new fighters as replacements for those lost in battle. The opposing carrier groups attacked one another, the resulting battle proving very costly for both sides.

Forces

Alliance:

- 2 EA Avenger Heavy Carriers (Beta) each with 24 Tiger and 24 Nova Starfuries
- 1 EA Hyperion Heavy Cruiser (Alpha) with 6 Tiger Starfuries
- 1 Brakiri Devaskar Carrier with 12 Falkosi and 6 Pikitos fighters



Frontline scenarios

- 1 Brakiri Drikorta Power Cruiser
- 2 Vree Xeel War Carriers each with 12 Tzymm heavy fighters
- 1 Vree Ximm Close Escort
- 1 Descari Scorava Cruiser & 24 Noscor fighters
- 1 Descari Rulpa Destroyer
- 2 Markab Romak Escort Frigates
- 2 Mitoc Jomic Frigates

Dilgar Imperium:

- 1 Mishakur-B Super Carrier with 66 Thorun-II and 6 Thorun-III fighters
- 2 Garasoch Heavy Carriers with 42 Thorun-II and 6 Thorun-III fighters each
- 1 Tratharti Gunship
- 2 Jashakar Frigates
- 1 Jashakar-E Escort Frigate
- 1 Jashakar-P Pulsar Frigate
- 1 Ochlavita Destroyer
- 1 Ochlavita-E Escort Destroyer

Setup

Set Map sheets edgewise to create a long map (if available a third map sheet should be added to extend the range). Use a floating map. Alliance forces setup at one short end, all ships start within 6 hexes of edge of map with speed 4, fighters unlaunched. The Alliance fleet has moved in from their jump point to where they will launch the strike- all jump engines are fully charged. Dilgar forces setup at opposite end of map, all ships within 6 hexes of edge of map with speed 0, fighters unlaunched.

Objective

Alliance: The Alliance knows it can't attack the factory, but they don't want to let such a valuable target escape. On the other hand they cannot afford to lose even one of their carriers. Alliance player may not retreat unless their fighters can escape through same jump point- the Alliance commanders know what happens to POWs, and will not leave anyone behind.

Minor Victory- Destroy 1 Enemy carrier and all Alliance carriers escape

Moderate Victory- Destroy 2 or cripple all 3 Enemy carriers and all Alliance carriers escape

Major Victory- Destroy all 3 enemy carriers and all Alliance carriers escape

Incredible Victory- Destroy all 3 Enemy carriers and escape with all Alliance warships and at least 25% of Alliance fighters

Any outcome with an Alliance carrier destroyed is a loss.

Dilgar Imperium: The Dilgar cannot let such an attack go unanswered, the Factory must be protected, and more importantly several important Alliance ships are now within striking range and are lightly defended! To destroy any of these would bring a great deal of attention to any commander- they must be destroyed! For victory conditions the Descari Scorava Cruiser counts as a carrier.

Minor Victory- Destroy 1 Alliance vessel and all Dilgar carriers survive

Moderate Victory- Destroy 2 Alliance vessels including at least 1 carrier and all Dilgar carriers survive

Major Victory- Destroy 4 Alliance vessels including at least 2 Carriers and all Dilgar carriers survive

Incredible Victory- Destroy all Alliance carriers and all Dilgar carriers survive

Any outcome with a Dilgar carrier destroyed is a loss.

Note that both sides victory conditions are mutually exclusive- only one side can pull off a victory- but both sides can lose.

Historically

The battle raged on, seemingly forever to the pilots. In the end however, after a near suicidal charge from Descari pilots against a wave of Thoruns the Alliance attack fighters broke through. When the Alliance finally withdrew, they had suffered horrendous casualties, losing over 85% of their fighters, with several ships heavily damaged (the Descari cruiser was only saved thanks to a savage defense from the two Markab escorts), but they had destroyed both Dilgar heavy carriers and heavily damaged the Super Carrier. While they hadn't destroyed their target, they still counted the battle a victory. It wouldn't be the last attack to fail to destroy the fighter yards at Tirrith.



Centauri Fighter Tips

The Razik

Raziks are very useful if flown with a Wolf pack of Mograths. The Raziks give fighter cover on the way in and once the Mograths close with a target and reduce its armor they now can use their guns to effect on the weakened armor to do serious damage.

The Razarik

Razariks should use their superior initiative to get the drop on heavy fighters. The Light Ballistic Torpedoes are a heavy fighters bane. If he wishes to avoid damage he must run away and not engage your ship. If you use the torps to harass him only fire one at a time, that's 4 turns of him running away. When he decides to stick around one will hurt him enough to make a drop out roll, and if you are still on his tail your guns will hopefully finish him off.

The Sentri

Sentris are interception and pursuit fighters. They are best used when chasing hurt enemy fighter flights. To accomplish this always accompany Sentris with a Haven or even a Maximus, since ships fire first hopefully the enemy will get chewed up before the fighter on fighter phase and the Sentris will finish him off.

The Sitara

Sitaras were originally a test project for the Ion Gun. They have virtually no defense against other fighters. My advice is load them on the Amar Fast Carrier and get them real close before launching. That gives your opponent less time to react to these heavy hitters near his capitol ships. This will hopefully give the Sitara time to do its damage before enemy fighters converge on them.

The Rutarian

Rutarians are the Cadillac of the Centauri line. The Jammer is a great asset but always remember two weaknesses it has. One, it is useless against fighters. Two, beware of ships using CCEW, even if they had no lock when the turn started if you move to 5 hexes or less you will get their full attention. Because of the first reason you should always accompany your Ruties with other fighters (another good Razik use) and because of the second never go into the enemy fleet's center, only attack the flanks.

Carriers fight for a place among the Centauri fleet

What does a person do with carriers and fighters when the force you are playing doesn't have a strong fighter doctrine? REID "The Merciless" HUPACH advises that you play to the strengths of the force you have. Centauri carriers and fighters are not the top strength of the Centauri fleet but that doesn't mean they are useless.

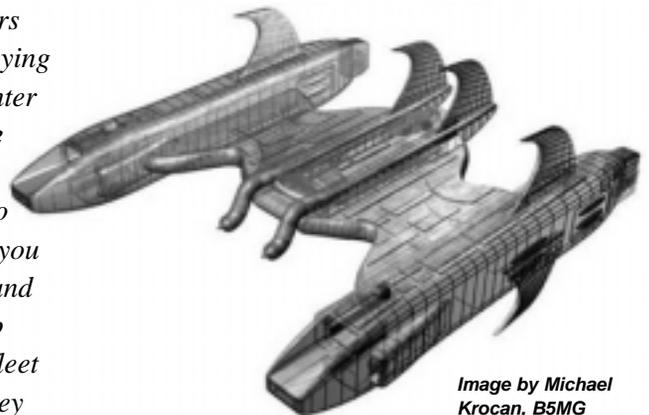


Image by Michael Krocan, B5MG

THE Centauri use two dedicated carriers, the Balvarin and the Balvarix. The Balvarin is an older design, predating the Dilgar War era when most races did not employ large numbers of fighters. For the time it was designed it was a fearsome sight when it jumped out of hyperspace into your system. In the present timeframe of the game it isn't quite as impressive. The drawbacks are that it is slow, relatively un-maneuverable, and its fighter complement isn't very large. The Balvarin carries only 36 medium fighters, compared to other races' prime carriers this is a very small number. The other problem the Balvarin has is its lack of any firepower itself, except anti fighter, carrying only Twin and Guardian arrays it has no real long range or heavy punch.

After all of that you may wonder why even use the Balvarin? OK now Ill tell you. The Balvarin has a few things going for it. One because of its armament it rarely needs to be escorted for anti- fighter protection. Also since it has very little anti- ship capability it can itself be used to escort smaller long range ships to protect them. One of my favorite uses is to have it run with a couple of Darkners to protect them from fighters. The Balvarin should use its ECM for DEW and CCEW, only this gives it the best chance for survival. In a campaign setting it's often a good idea to leave your Balvarins in hyperspace and send in the fighters with your other ships, this leaves them available to enter later and pick up stragglers or to open a jump-point from in hyperspace for your forces to leave by. Talking jump points, the Balvarin is the perfect ship to open your jump point either coming or going since it is usually left in a reserve position.

The Balvarix while a very similar design has a few features, which can make a big difference. The first is its ability to carry Rutarians. While this makes a difference more with fighter tactics it does make a big difference. The other change is the elimination of the Guardian arrays for a couple of Matter Cannons. This alone gives the Balvarix a different role in combat. You say two MCs, who cares. Tell that to a G'quan, which has his front thrusters gone, which has also gone through most of the Centauri fleet and wishes to accelerate to escape. Suddenly in front of him appears a carrier, well that's nothing to worry about all he has is small guns, then whack, whack, two Matter cannons make his day even worse. Yes the Balvarix is a perfect straggler killer. While both carriers are of the same design they are significantly different. On a side note I often use the Balvarix, or at least the thought of it, for another use. It is the perfect ship for a Dargan to simulate so he can launch his fighters shoot his matter cannons and still stay hidden, while not a true Balvarix tactic, it is a fun extra.

There is one more ship to cover here, the Amar Fast carrier. Based on a Darkner Hull this carrier only brings 12 fighters to the battle. The Amar has three distinct uses, First is to quickly deliver fighters to a rear or flank area, the second is for giving fighter cover to fast wolfpacks, and the third is escort duty for ships which stand back. It is the perfect escort to the ship its hull comes from - the Darkner. It can run with the pack posing as one of the Darkners, then, when enemy fighters approach, spitting out his Sentris and opening up with the twin arrays.

Do supercarriers belong on the game board?

By **DIOGENES**

A CARRIER'S flexibility, potential and problems are very hard to replicate in any game system. There are simply too many considerations to effectively take into account. But some attention needs to be focused on the problems associated with fighter operations in order to balance their awesome power. Where B5W is about lumbering battlewagons slugging it out at close quarters, Fleet Action is about large fleets seeking to gain the upper hand.

Thus fighters have a different role between the game systems. This role changes even further when it comes to comparing a stand-alone battle and a long-term campaign. But it is a difference that is not reflected in either set of rules.

Supercarriers - and their hordes of fighters - do not belong in standalone small skirmish games. They belong in a series of games represented by an encompassing campaign system.

In a campaign, parity in points is not a consideration when it comes to individual battles. That is entirely based on tactics. Point parity is relevant only on an "entire fleet" scale. Thus the differential between the strike power of a fighter group compared with a dreadnought is lost in a sea of differences acceptable because they are all the results of choices made by the players. However, on a stand-alone game's point-parity basis, large numbers of fighters do upset the fragile balance. The awesome power of a supercarrier and its fighter wing belongs very much in a campaign setting. It can go from one battle to another, projecting its power over a wide area. But keeping a carrier fully supplied with replacement fighters and torpedoes is a difficult task. None of these considerations are reflected in stand-alone skirmishes. Perhaps, if they were, a sense of game balance would be restored.

Close Combat: A carrier is "out of place" when it comes to set-piece skirmishes. Dedicated fleet carriers were never considered to be a tactical weapon. Instead, their deployment is almost always for strategic reasons. Frigates, destroyers and cruisers place themselves in the face of danger. Fleet carriers do their utmost to keep at its edge. If a squadron of vessels closes to engagement range with a fleet carrier and its escorts, this should represent a major battle has already been lost and the fighter group greatly diminished.

Launching and landing fighters is not an easy task. Matching relative speeds and courses takes time and effort. It becomes even harder with a tired pilot or damaged craft. Thus these periods are when a carrier is always at its most vulnerable - and does not want to be dodging enemy weapons fire.

Attrition: Where a fleet carrier goes, that's where your main assault force goes. It casts a protective umbrella about the ships around it.

But fleet carriers rapidly find their fighter complement diminishing during a campaign, and are rarely able to launch full strike wings.

In a campaign, building a carrier - and replacing its fighters - is an expensive and time consuming process. Thus the destruction of a fleet carrier has effects that go far beyond the skirmish itself. It can change the entire

Morshin: This Minbari carrier is what would be designated an escort carrier. It is essentially an adapted merchant hull intended to carry as many fighters as it can within its limited frame. While it is provided some protection by Jammers, its five fusion cannons and three electro-pulse guns provide only basic point defense. Armor is unevenly spread over its small structure and it is unable to accelerate away from any attacker. It does retain some ability to turn away from trouble. While it's 8 flight fighter complement is handy, it probably does not justify the warships needed to escort this vulnerable ship.

Poseidon: The peak of supercarrier design, the Poseidon displays all the expected strengths and weaknesses. It has a minimal self defense optimised against enemy fighters. Its acceleration is not bad by Earthforce standards, but insufficient to escape a serious attack. However, it's large structure contains a considerable number of fighters. Strike waves of up to 16 flights are capable of smashing all but the best protected task groups long before they can pose any threat to the carrier itself.

Balvarin: The Centauri's Balvarin - like most carriers - is not intended to get close and personal in a ship-to-ship fight. It is armed only with Twin Arrays, but the Centauri have attempted to give the large vessel some battlefield survivability through heavy armour. Its maneuverability is average, but its acceleration is low. The Balvarix upgrade of this vessel is an unfortunate temptation to use this carrier in a combat role it was never intended for.

T'Rann: The Narn took a different approach to carrier design than the Centauri. The T'Rann sacrificed its armor and fighter carrying capacity for extra acceleration and bigger guns. While it is the same size as a Balvarin, the attempt to arm the vessel with heavier weaponry has stunted its anti-fighter potential. The limited number of flights it can carry places another cloud over this extremely vulnerable vessel's combat value.



strategic outlook of both players. This is why destroying an enemy's fleet carriers - and defending your own - must always be high on any list of priorities.

Carriers also can only carry a limited number of replacement missiles and torpedoes for their fighters. And the fighters themselves tend to be whittled away. Once these are consumed, the carrier must either meet up with a tender or return to base.

Endurance: Piloting a fighter is a physical experience. G-forces, ammunition, fuel and a lack of amenities generally limit their "in seat" time to a matter of hours. Generally, a fighter strike is all about flying to the target, depositing your ordinance, and returning to base in order to prepare for doing it all over again. In B5W and FA, the only real concessions to a fighter's limited endurance is their missile load along with restrictions on how often fighter flights can be issued new orders.

Communications: In combat, changing orders is very difficult. Ordering a fighter flight to change target over the airwaves is prone to confused interpretation and interception. So returning to base for a quick rest, rearming of the fighter and a toilet break would be almost vital.

Game Replication: Many of these factors, combined, cut the "time over target" of fighters considerably. Thus their awesome firepower is only a fleeting thing. They're there, then they're gone. How can these factors be replicated in a game? Here are a few suggestions.

a) Consider the carrier to be "off the board". Its fighter wing arrival is delayed according to the various reinforcement rules. Enemy ships that cross your side of the board get the opportunity to engage the carrier.

b) Perhaps previous fighter attrition could be emulated in stand-alone games by a "chance" die roll to determine what losses the carrier's fighter complement had suffered and whether-or-not there are enough missiles/torpedoes left to be fitted.

c) Make strike fighters return to their carrier before new orders can be issued. They go out, attack their target, return - refuel - rearm, and re-brief. It takes them off the field for a valuable period of time.

d) Limit the number of flights that can be launched/landed per pulse. Combine this with the requirement that a carrier flies straight and at a constant speed while the fighters are landing or taking off. This increases the ship's vulnerability considerably.



Misleading structure blocks

SOME ships appear to have more structure on one section than another, many times this is not the case. The optical illusion makes a large brick of boxes appear larger than a long row of boxes. If you've been fooled by this it could influence you to making mistakes firing on your opponent's ships or positioning your own.

- Todd Boyce

Look before you leap

IT'S always a good idea to look over your SCSs carefully; check the sizes of the structure blocks, weapon arcs, how much power you have when you shut off the systems and what you can do with it, how much thrust your thrusters can handle, and so forth. By knowing your ships you will be able to make the best use of them.

- Todd Boyce

Fighter ordinance

WHEN using ordinance capable fighters with large capacities, such as the Badger or Sky Serpent, don't fully load the fighter, as this can consume a large number of points per fighter. The reason behind this, is in the event of fighter destruction you would lose a lot of your combat potential. Underloading reduces the amount you would be affected. Losing a flight of 134 pt. fully loaded Badgers or 226 pt. fully loaded Sky Serpents before they can deliver their payloads is really depressing.

- Scott McGaffin

Carrier launching

WHEN taking fighters into battle loaded on a carrier, launch the fighters as soon as possible unless the carrier is completely out of harm's way. This is to prevent loss of fighters before they can be launched by destruction of their carrier.

- Scott McGaffin

Fighters don't need fancy footwork to Pak' a punch

Pak'ma'ra Strategy and Tactics

By TODD BOYCE

THE Por'fa'tis may not seem impressive at first. They are the only fighters that have a turn delay, their turn cost is higher than most other fighters, they have a lower initiative than most normal medium fighters and because their weapons are plasma, their damage potential degrades with distance.

The strengths of the Por'fa'tis far outweighs these disadvantages. They have a much wider firing arc than most other fighters, a lot of thrust, a high offensive bonus, and their weapons being plasma means they kill enemy fighters or do damage to even heavily armored ship systems with equal ease.

Minimizing the weaknesses and emphasizing the strengths of these fighters, while true for any ship or fighter, is very important with them. Here are a few tips that may help:

Always use the firing arc to your advantage. When you maneuver these fighters you will rarely want to aim them directly at another ship or fighter flight because the defensive values are worse on the front than the sides. Fly along side of your target so that you can hit them but any return fire hits your side. If you want to be in the same hex as the target, fly along side and use your last hex of movement to perform half of a sideslip into the hex. This will once again force any incoming shots from your target to hit your side.

Since the Por'fa'tis has a 1/2 turn cost and 1/3 turn delay, there are very few speeds that let you maximize both. These are speeds 6, 12, 18 or any other multiple of 6. The problem is that with 15 thrust, speed 6, 10 and 14 are the break points for maximizing the number of turns you can make which is what I normally use as my gauge. Add in turn shortening and it becomes even more complicated. For this reason I try to use sideslips instead of turns whenever possible. Most of the time, you can make one turn in combination with sideslips to land in the hex you want. Also keep in mind that all fighters are considered agile so even though you have a turn delay, snap turns are always available to you.

In the overall scope of things, the Por'fa'tis occupies one of the most important roles in a Pak'ma'ra fleet as a primary anti fighter escort and coup de gras force.

As effectively defensive as Plasma Webs are, you need fighters to further help your ships' anti fighter defenses by being an offensive force that your opponent will have to deal with. When you attack, you don't necessarily need to destroy an opponent's entire

fighter flight. By reducing their flight by three or four fighters, it will become almost completely ineffective against your ships. Destroy them all if you can but weakening them is often almost as good.

Be wary of your own Plasma Webs. If you move your fighters to the middle of your fleet and within Plasma Web range, your opponent may fly into their hex to attack your fighters or your ships. You generally don't want to drop a web on your own fighters unless your opponent has far more fighters in that hex than you and they will use that against you if they can.

As a coup de gras force, these fighters excel in attacking ships. Their plasma guns at close range pack as much punch as most heavy fighters' and even more against heavily armored primary systems. If you were unable to destroy an enemy ship but blew off a side, send in the Por'fa'tis to finish them off. They will do so quickly and efficiently.

One of the most fortunate things about the Pak'ma'ra forces is that their carriers are also very effective combat platforms. The Resh'kas'u and Ar'tees are both excellent ships and either one is a great choice. They are quite different from each other however, and which one you take affects your combat strategy.

The Resh'kas'u is used basically like a light cruiser. It excels at escorting a Pshul'shi or Thar'not'ak, supplying additional firepower that will ensure the destruction of whatever ships they target. With it's four Plasma Webs it is a very effective escort to these heavier ships and you should try to keep it between them and your enemy's fighters.

This is also one of the few common ships in the Pak'ma'ra fleet so if you really need to bring a lot of fighters, you aren't restricted.

The Ar'tees has heavy weapons, three Plasma Webs and good initiative. This combination makes it a great gunboat able to hurt larger ships and capable of occasionally hunting fighters. A good use is to keep this ship in and around the main formation, using its Plasma Accelerators to augment the firepower of whatever ship needs it at the time and to plug any gaps in the overall plasma web defense. If you win initiative against a flight of enemy fighters, send it out to hunt them down. Being such a small ship, many opponents ignore it in favor of the larger and more threatening targets but in the endgame, the Plasma Accelerators make the Ar'tees the best ship the Pak have against any remaining fighter flights since these weapons have a lower penalty to hit and can fire every turn.

* * *

AT-A-GLANCE GUIDE: FLEET ACTION ANTI-FIGHTER FIRE

VERY-LONG-RANGE ANTI-FIGHTER FIRE

SECONDARY WEAPONS: Secondary weapons are defined in the FA rulebook as any weapon that can fire every pulse.

- Each secondary weapon system can fire on different fighter flights at the same time primary weapons are firing at ships. (Clarification)

Example: A Demos has targeted it's Ballistic Torpedo on a G'Quan cruiser, it could utilise both it's plasma accelerator and heavy arrays to target fighters. The twin array could target a flight of Frazis whilst the plasma accelerator targets a flight of Goriths.

- The weapon's (x)-factor (in the appropriate firing arc) is halved due to the splitting of the ship's fire-control resources - though there is no impact on primary weapons. (FA Rule)

- If primary weapons fire on one fighter flight, while secondary weapons fire on other fighter flights, the same (x)-factor penalty applies to the secondary weapons. (FA Rule)

- Pulse weapons and Molecular Slicers can hit different fighters with each die. Flash weapons affect each fighter in the entire flight as with all of their dice. Re-roll for each flight.

All other multi-die weapons printed to date can only hit a single fighter with all their damage dice. (Clarification)

ENERGY MINES: These can be used as an inefficient form of flak - given their low rate of fire. However, they can be useful, particularly against high concentrations of fighter flights.

System: Roll a d12 per flight in the blast radius. Check the table in TTV. If the flight is struck by the blast, each fighter in the flight will be subject to 1d8 damage. (FA Rule)

MISSILES:

- When ship-based missiles are fired against fighters. For each successful hit a separate damage roll is made that can destroy an individual fighter.

- Fighter based missiles launched at a fighter flight utilise the dogfight table to determine the number of kills. (Clarification)

- Fighter based missiles are fired at the end of the flight's movement, and cannot be fired during a dogfight. (Clarification)

AF MODE DEFENSES

A ship can fire it's AF weapons in either Close-in mode, or Long Range mode. Each AF weapon system cannot be assigned different AF modes, thus a Demos cannot allocate it's heavy array for Long-Range AF, while keeping its plasma accelerator available for close defense. Different ships in a squadron can fire in different modes. Thus escorts can choose to fire the LR(AF) into the hex of their squadron commander to help protect it while the commander keeps all its AF available for self defense. The mechanics and rules applicable to both modes are explained here:

Close-In-Weapons-System (CIWS) AF Fire: This is when fighters are making their final approach to attack an individual ship, or are passing through the same hex of space as that ship. It allows the ship's full AF rating to be utilised at once, and prior to each subse-

quent multiple attack (reduced by damage).

System: CIWS AF Fire operates this way. Divide the AF(x) factor of each weapon system to be used in this manner by half of the number of all enemy fighters (rounded up) in your hex. This AF rating is then fired at each fighter. If the AF rating is less than one, half the fighters (rounded up) will take AF fire at an x1 rating. The residual flights are not fired at. The defender chooses the flights attacked. (FA rule + clarification).

Long-range AF Fire: is firing weapons with an AF(x) rating against fighters in any of the six adjacent hexes to a ship. There is no one-pulse delay in switching between AF modes

System: This is calculated the same way as normal AF fire, though the AF value is determined by halving the weapons normal (x) factor in that arc.

- Weapons firing in AF mode are declared, by the FA Rulebook, as being used in reduced power mode. Thus they can be fired more than once if a multiple attack is being conducted on that same ship.

- AF fire can be directed at any flight within range of the ship. (FA Rule).

- AF fire can be directed against a flight at any time that flight passes through a hex covered by a ship's AF. Thus, a flight of Tbolts moving six hexes passes through an escort vessel's outer AF radius on the fourth hex of its movement and is subject to an AF attack. Damage must be resolved after it has finished movement, but before any attack is made. (Clarification)

- If six flights pass through that designated LRAF fire hex, your ship gets a shot of LR AF(x) against each of those flights. (Clarification)

- If a fighter flight(s) passed through the firing arcs of several escort vessels on its way to the main target, the flight(s) may have sustained an attack from each of those escorts before conducting its strike on the target. (Clarification)

- Anti-fighter (AF) fire takes place before each individual attack (FA rule). It does not matter if this is a multiple attack against the same ship or separate ships.

- A one pulse delay is applicable when switching from standard (including secondary weapon) mode, to either of the AF modes. (FA rule)

FIGHTER ANTI-SHIP ATTACKS

- Fighters with an anti-ship ability receive a bonus +1 on their to-hit and damage rolls against HCVs and Capital ships.

- Fighters on a strike mission suffer one free attack when intercepted by fighters to reflect the concentration of their pilot and sensor systems against ships. This means the attacked flight cannot fight back in a dogfight for that pulse. (AF Rule)

- Escort fighters "leap out" to break the movement of incoming fighters at the earliest available point. Thus, if a Strike fighter moving 6 hexes comes within range of an Escort at movement 3, it is intercepted by the Escort at

that point - preventing the strike fighter from moving any closer. (AF rule)

System: Escort fighters may intercept within a radius equal to half the lowest number of hexes (rounded up) they can move in any pulse. (AF rule)

- Strike fighters may use afterburners to "blow through" Escort fighter intercepts. This is an optional response to a possible intercept attempt. (FA rule).

- Escort fighters may attack the ship the strike fighters they are protecting have targeted. However, they can only do this during the normal firing phase - not at the same time the strike fighters are attacking. Thus they would only get one attack on one ship if the strike fighters end their movement there. They would also be subject to additional AF fire during the firing phase. (Clarification)

FIGHTER MULTIPLE ATTACKS

- Fighters with excess movement may "spend" that energy on multiple attacks against the one target. Multiple attacks on the same ship must result in the fighter ending its movement there. (AF rules)

System: Subtract the number of hexes moved to reach the target ship from the total movement available in that pulse, divide this by two (rounding up any fractions), this is how many strikes the fighter flight may make. All flights have a minimum of one attack. Defending ships get an AF attack before each strike.

FIGHTER INTERCEPTS (clarification)

- During the fighter movement phase, flights are moved alternately. One side moves one, the other side moves one. The side with the most flights moves the remainder last.

- Escort Fighters "jump out" immediately when anything enters their interception range and start a dogfight - ending that enemy flights movement (unless they utilise afterburners to blow past the escorts).

- Superiority Fighters must intercept during their movement. Thus, the player must be cautious of the order he moves his flights in.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- Jammers apply to any weapon system with a range more than 0. Thus at a minimum a weapon system will suffer a -1 penalty to hit because of the jammer ability to shift short to medium range. Jammers on ships have no effect on fighters attacking them in the same hex (However, fighter-based ballistic weapons are affected normally).

- Jammer-equipped fighters are considered as having a +1 to their Dogfight rating at all times. (Clarification)

- EM shields do not have any effect on fighter attacks. It is assumed the fighter has "penetrated" these fields. (Clarification)

- Gravity nets get to roll against every fighter flight in a given hex due to the light weight of fighters. (Clarification)

- Fighters with Stealth or shields get a +1 to their dogfight rating.



Defending against the hungry Lion

By ALEX ROBERTS

Location: T'Lin system, Week 19 of the Narn-Centauri War. Narn starbase T'Rincomalee.

Operational Situation: The last Narn held Centauri system has fallen, and Centauri fleets, including large carrier squadrons, are pushing into Narn space. At T'Rincomalee, a small Narn civilian base, and other planets in the T'Lin system, a number of battered Narn remnants have gathered, girding themselves for further Centauri assaults. Narn early warning probes have spotted a large Centauri carrier group moving in on an attack vector towards starbase T'Rincomalee.

Tactical Situation: All Narn civilian transports and merchant vessels able to leave T'Rincomalee have already done so. The base's squadrons of fighters have been fuelled and are ready for action. 2 Narn battlegroups are moving at speed towards the base to provide for its defense. In addition, these groups have been tasked with destroying the Centauri carriers. By depriving the Centauri of their fighter support, the Narn hope to be able to blunt the Centauri offensive into Narn space.

Centauri Forces:

Lione Force (Commander Ren Lione):

Squadron 1: 2 Balvarin Carriers (6 flights Senti each), 3 Haven, 2 Maximus, Ex-Fighter Ops on Squadron Commander

Squadron 2: 2 Primus (2 flights Senti each), 3 Haven, 1 Maximus

Rhys Force (Commander: Dione Rhys)

Squadron 1: 2 Centurion, 1 Covran, 2 Haven

Squadron 2: 4 Darkner

Squadron 3: 4 Vorchan

Squadron 4: 3 Altarian (1 flight Senti each)

Centauri Orders: Attack all enemy warships, aircraft, and bases in the vicinity. Priority is given to the destruction of the base. Enemy resistance is expected to be primarily base

defense fighters, with the possibility of contact with elements of the Narn fleet.

Centauri Victory Conditions:

Decisive: Destroy the base at T'Rincomalee.

Destroy more than half of the Narn fleet.

Tactical: Destroy the base at T'Rincomalee.

Narn Forces:

T'Rincomalee: One Ja'Dul starbase.

Force A (Commander K'Tal):

Squadron 1: 1 G'Tal, 2 G'Quan, 2 T'Rann, 3 Thentus

Squadron 2: 4 T'Rakk

Force B (Commander T'Ran):

Squadron 1: 2 G'Quan, 2 Thentus, 1 G'Lan

Squadron 2: 3 G'Korith

Squadron 3: 3 Ka'Toc

(All Narn ships may choose fighters as per Narn fighter rules, i.e. Frazi or Goriths)

Narn Orders: Protect the base at T'Rincomalee. Destroy Centauri carriers.

Narn Victory Conditions:

Decisive: Destroy both Centauri Balvarin's. Prevent the destruction of the base at T'Rincomalee.

Tactical: Destroy both Centauri carriers.

Setup:

Base T'Rincomalee is 6 hexes in from West edge, and 6 hexes in from North edge.

Force A and B are placed within a five-by-five hex square in the Sout-West corner.

Force Lione is placed in a space within six hexes from the East edge and four hexes from the South edge.

Force Rhys is positioned between four and six hexes from the North Edge, but no further than four hexes from the East edge.

Historical Outcome: The Centauri caused heavy damage to the base, but failed to completely destroy it. Narn forces were able to account for one carrier before the Centauri withdrew. However, within days, further Centauri forces had arrived in-system, and eas-

ily forced a Narn retreat, securing the sector of T'Lin.

Alternative Fleets:

Attacker: Lione Force: Replace with 4500 points ships. At least 2 ships must be carriers and carry 6 flights of fighters or more. If such a ship is not available, use the ship that can carry the most fighters in that Race's fleet list. These 2 ships do not count towards regular rarity restrictions.

Rhys Force: Replace with 5000 points ships.

Defender: Base: Substitute with any base <1000 points. If no such base is available, use lowest cost base, and remove all weapons with range >12. Defense consists of fighters totaling no more than 200 points in flights. These can be used even if base does not normally carry fighters.

Force A: Replace with 4000 points in ships.

Force B: Replace with 4000 points in ships.

Tactics and Considerations:

Centauri: Your forces are split up, and far from the base. You are faced with the choices of consolidating your forces, and attacking as one, or sending your northern force to attack the base, while your southern force delays or flanks the main Narn relief force.

You must also consider the safety of your carriers. To commit them to direct battle is to risk their loss, and a Narn victory. However, if you leave them behind, lightly defended, the Narn could forsake the base, destroy your carriers, and escape with a tactical victory.

Narn: Your choices are equally distinct. Do you protect the base, thus denying the Centauri a decisive victory, or do you concentrate on the carriers? These are hard decisions. Go for the gold, or take a partial victory over the Centauri? Note that in this scenario, it is quite possible for both players to come away with a victory.

* * *

SHADOWS

With the recent release of the B5W Tactics Guide, I expected to find tactics articles for every race in the game. Unfortunately, while I saw tactics and advice for everything from the Abbai to the Vree, I did not see anything on Shadow tactics; only advice on how to kill them. This bothered me, until I realized why no one thought the Shadows needed tactics. However, in the games I've played using the Shadows, I've discovered that it takes more to win than "Pick a target and kill it." You are consistently outnumbered, even when you have more points than the enemy, and a three to one or four to one battle is dangerous territory even for a Shadow cruiser. A six to one advantage can kill almost any ship in the game. To survive long enough to kill all the other ships requires some planning and careful thought.

Let's look at the systems available to the Shadows.

By TAREK, Captain-Pilot, Battlesquid Potempkin

Energy Diffuser The number one defensive system of any Shadow vessel, it's also the cause of most of the tactical errors made by new Shadow players. Yes, it can absorb a lot of damage. Yes, it can keep on absorbing damage. It does not, under any circumstances, make you invincible, and flying into the teeth of the enemy is a really bad idea. To get the most out of the Energy Diffuser, you have to think of it not as a damage sink, but rather as structure that repairs itself at a very fast rate. By thinking of it as a structure block, you get back to the basic mindset of "Don't get hit." Not getting hit is a good thing, especially in the typical Shadow battle where you're outnumbered three or four to one. This means that, as a Shadow vessel, you should keep the range open, despite all that "extra structure" you're carrying around. Further, you should open up the range even more and "turtle" once every few turns, just to allow your diffusers to clear out those tendrils. There's also a nifty little way to maximise your use of the tendrils themselves. When a sub-volley of a raking shot hits a system with five points of armor, put the remaining five points into a ten-point tendril. When a volley hits a system with six points of armor, put the remaining four points into a twenty-point tendril. The 20-point tendril can thus absorb five hits on systems with six points of armor, while the 10-point tendril can absorb two hits on systems with five points of armor. This maximizes your tendril capacity, and makes it less likely that you're stuck with one point of unused and unusable tendril capacity in a 10 or 20 point tendril. Remember, though, sub-volleys of a raking shot that hit a system a second time do not get reduced by armor. Also, Standard-mode volleys larger than ten points can be a problem when figuring out tendril allocation. Just remember the rule above, and try to keep 4 points open on 20-point tendrils.

Slicer Beam One of the best weapons in the game, the Shadow Slicer Beam ignores armor, has an FC of +8/+6/+4, and when fully charged can bring down just about any Younger Race ship in the game. It can attack multiple targets in



Tactical Display

arc, and can fire defensively without degrading its intercept capability. The key to using it successfully is remembering that A.) you don't have to fire defensively except against missiles, B.) you don't have to fire at multiple targets (excepting fighters), and C.) you don't have to fire every turn just because you can. The full-power shot will take down most capital ships, the two-turn shot will take down most HCVs, and the one-turn shot is good against MCVs, LCVs, and flights of fighters. Knowing this, you can plan how often you'll be shooting the Beam by what you're facing. Splitting fire, however, is generally a bad idea (unless you're shooting multiple times into the same flight of fighters). Odds are, you've got a good lock on one ship, a basic lock on to just about every other ship, and a few points in DEW. As a result, splitting fire just means that you're likely to throw away some damage potential that you could have pumped into the vessel you're most likely to hit. More on Sensors later. The other thing you have to remember about the slicer beam is its "limited" weapon arc. That 120 degree arc in the front of the ship is another incentive to keep the range open. It's a heck of a lot easier to get a ship in arc when it is thirty hexes away than when it is three hexes away. The FC penalty of -1 per three hexes should give you a solid idea that this is a relatively long-ranged weapon. Use it that way. Finally, when picking targets, blow the enemy scout up first. Then go after his carriers, unless they've already launched all their fighters. Trust me. It'll save you a lot of pain later on.

Phasing Drive The Half-Phasing ability of this system is neat, but its also very limited in application. Use this only when you've been targeted by lots of missiles, are probably going to be the target of a ramming attempt, or when you want to get through to the other side of that asteroid quickly. That -4 to your Defense vs. most

weapons is deceptive, and may trick you into using half-phasing at the worst possible time; when your diffusers are near capacity. Never use the half-phasing maneuver when your diffusers are near capacity, especially at close ranges. Need I repeat this? Never use the half-phasing maneuver when your diffusers are near capacity! Odds are, you will blow up when those ships with their hard locks fire every weapon they have at you and hit the Phasing Drive multiple times.

Advanced Sensors What's not to like about this? Blanket DEW doesn't work against you, and your sensors can't be disrupted by ELINT ships (with the exception of any Vorlon or other Ancient Race's Scout ships). Even Minbari Jammers have no effect on your ship. However, disregard the statements that a Shadow cruiser either goes all OEW or all DEW. Even when you're aggressively pursuing one ship, keep a basic lock on three or four other ships, and use any remaining points for DEW. Most Younger Races have sensor suites of 8 to 10. Knowing what your target has for sensors allows you to match his "turtle" and still keep a few points for DEW. And you'll need DEW, unless you're out beyond range 36 or so of his nearest ship. The other reason for keeping a basic lock on other ships is to increase your tactical flexibility. You have only the one weapon, and your primary target might well slip out of your weapon arc. This way, you're never doubling your range penalties for FC. This is the same reason that you never completely "turtle." Keep 2-4 EW for a basic lock-on to his ships. If the opportunity arises, you might get a good shot at one of his ships that devoted all its EW to offense, even though you were planning on just diffusing energy that turn.

Vortex Disruptor An extremely specialized weapon. You might as well leave it charged up, as there's no point to shutting it down; it can't give you another point of sensors, it can't give you any more thrust thanks to the Bio-Drive system, and you never know when you might need to disrupt a jump point. The only reason to shut it down, in fact, is to cover a power loss

from a reactor hit.

Self-Repair Use it while you got it, and use it when you can. Sure, it can't repair structure, but then again you've already got "self-repairing structure" in the form of Energy Diffusers. It is, however, the least well-armed of all the Shadow ship's systems, so you should diffuse any damage on it when you can, just like you would a Diffuser hit.

Bio-Thrusters Sweet. 18 points of thrust, almost freely applicable in any direction you want. Read the bio-drive rules until you're familiar with them, since they are a little bit tricky. Note that the Shadow cruiser is capable of very tight turns. A turn delay of 1/3 means that at speed 9 the Shadow ship can turn through 120 degrees in six hexes. Speed 9, incidentally, is IMO the ideal speed for a Shadow cruiser, followed closely by speed 6. At speed 9 you can turn twice, though this uses up all your thrust. At speed 6, you can turn three times, completely reversing your direction though again, this uses all your thrust. Remember your weapon arc when planning your maneuvers for each combat turn, and try to get as much of the board as possible within the arc of your slicer beam. Don't forget the Pivot and Sideslip maneuvers! The sideslip is great for opening the range and allowing you to get more of the board under your gun, and you can take advantage of the "Narn Sliver" technique, where you get your larger front/aft profile out from under the guns of the enemy while still allowing you a shot with your Slicer Beam. The Pivot is even better when the enemy has anticipated where your movement will take you and carefully moved most of his ships out of your anticipated firing arc.

In conclusion Shadow tactics can be boiled down to the following points:

- 1.) Keep the range open. Ideally, you should be fighting in the 15 to 30 hex range.
- 2.) Maneuver, maneuver, maneuver. Keep as much of the board as possible under your weapon's firing arc.
- 3.) Back off from time to time to let your diffusers empty out tendrils.
- 4.) Keep your options open. Never go fully OEW or fully DEW; you'll miss some good opportunities.
- 5.) Think before splitting your Slicer Beam; most of the time, you'll allow one ship to live that should have died.
- 6.) Never use half-phasing when your diffusers are full! (unless you're going to die anyway, then what the heck. At least the enemy won't be able to salvage those parts of your ship that will be drifting in hyperspace...)

Finally, you should always be thinking ahead. Don't just plan what you're doing this turn, try to anticipate what your opponent is doing. And don't stop there, try to plan what you will be doing next turn. Since most of these are basic tactics, it's easy to see why experienced players say, when asked for advice about flying the Shadows, "Just pick a target and kill it."

* * *

Who needs a jumpgate when you have warp drive?

Fleet Action is a very enjoyable game, fully the equal of such large scale naval games as Full Thrust, Silent Death, and others. But why limit the fun to the Babylon 5 Universe? KARL JOHNSON (Refa Madness) has converted more than 100 ships from Star Fleet Battles to Fleet Action sheets and rules. These can be found at www.robertshome.org. Here is how, and why, he undertook such a task.

Why Bother?

I really enjoy playing FA - it's the best fleet level space combat game I've been involved in and is grounded in the B5 universe (IMO the best SciFi in a loooong while). But before there was B5, I played SFB (not the current monstrosity, but one of its predecessors from the dim past of the late 70's - although I've recently acquired a taste for the NYC White Pages version, AKA the Captain's Edition) and had a lot of fun with it, but every time my friends and I sat down to play a big battle (8+ ships each side), the game bogged down into 2 hour turns as we tried to keep track of it all. Needless to say, we never finished one of those marathon games before throwing in the towel due to boredom and/or frustration at the game's pace. One of the things I remember really liking about That Other Game was the ship designs - kewl weapons and different systems.

So, not too long ago, I had the bright idea of combining the best of both worlds and came up with a conversion scheme that used the SFB ships in FA format (my sparse conversion notes can be found on arobert's site, their temporary home). While I did my best to use FA conventions for as much as possible, some things required special attention so that an FA Trek game could be played in the same amount of time with the same number of ships as its B5 counterpart.

Why Did You Make (X) Work That Way?

Phasers: The comment I've heard most often is about the rate of fire for Phasers (types I and II): they can fire every turn in SFB, so why don't they fire every pulse in your version? Two reasons. First: to allow more graduation in damage between the types of phasers in the game, and Second: to make the players consider their main weaponry's shots more carefully instead of allowing shots at anything in range during every pulse (also helps to keep the game moving along with less chance of Carpal Tunnel syndrome developing from all of the extra die rolling).

Shields: Second most popular comment is that They Don't Work That Way In SFB. True, but FA has a shield mechanic in place already and I wanted to use something familiar from the



FA core rules (slightly modified) instead of allowing extra structure to represent shields, or give them Shadow-type diffuser capability. Overall, it works well as is if you take the concept of "leaky shields" into consideration.

Conclusion

Although Wraith (and aroberts) have used and/or written rules for LCV's, I personally think they've missed something here in treating them as dual-structure fighters. Most ships in the LCV category have weapons that can target (in FA terms) out to 9-12 hexes, so why limit them to using these weapons as in-hex strike fighter weapons? So I came up with what I think is a fair transliteration of SFB's version of the LCV, the PF (Fast Patrol Ship). Not saying it's the only way to handle this class of unit, but it works for this idiom pretty well. Other systems (such as anti-drone fire, Aegis systems, Cloaking Device, T-Bombs, Power Absorber Panels and others) used or built upon rules already existing in FA (while some systems, like tractor beams, were ignored altogether), all with the goal of keeping the flavor of the original ships without having to hire out an accounting firm to get through a large game.

FA Trek is a work in progress; there's still a large number of ships and a few systems (as well as all of the Tholians) to import into the FA format, so I'll keep tinkering with it until I'm satisfied with the results (or until no one wants to download anything more - there are currently close to 200 distinct units I've converted and made available - ship classes range from gunboats to battleships; carriers, fighters, bases and freighters all make their appearances, too). If you have any comments to make about the rules, ship conversion, or just want to see your favorite ship added to the mix, let me know - there just might be a 2nd edition waiting in the wings.

* * *

Pathfinder

Outrider of the Ancients

Playtest details for the revised Walker vessel for AOG's upcoming Wars of the Ancients

See Zip folder for attached B5W SCS

PATHFINDER

Base Hull (Restricted Deployment:50%)
Called "Those That Find the Path", the Walker scout ship was generally the first unit sent into any new area. Equipped with superior sensors, the Pathfinder functions well on solo missions and as a part of a fleet. The scientific equipment aboard uses the following rules:

Special Rules: ELINT Ship

The ship is an Ancient ELINT vessel. All EW loaned counts as Advanced Sensors, even if loaned to vessels from other races without Advanced Sensors.

TECHNOLOGY

Telepathy

If playing a scenario vs. Shadows where telepathy is allowed, all piloted Walker ships are assumed to contain a single P15 telepath, and use the same rules as the Vorlons, with the exception of *Limited Autonomy*. While attempting telepathic jamming, a Walker ship must deactivate its Energy Draining Field.

Enhancements

A single Pathfinder may be modified with the *Expert ELINT Officer* enhancement from Showdowns-2, and pay for it at the Abbai's cost. All of these modifications are still purely optional, and are never used in tournaments unless specifically noted. Combat Point costs are determined as normal.

Discharged Weapon Systems

All of the weapon systems on vessels operated by the Walkers of Sigma 957 are actually extremely powerful scientific equipment. The damage that they cause to an opponent is merely a side effect. As such, the Walkers find switching their systems into offensive mode mildly undesirable and avoid doing so until the last possible moment. As such, any Walker system that gains a benefit through saving shots from a previous turn are assumed to be completely discharged at the beginning of a



Straight from the Council of Ancients comes this revised Walker Pathfinder. Quite a bit has changed since January, so please check it out. Wars of the Ancients is still a few months off, and the Council would certainly appreciate any comments or play test feedback that can be provided. Please e-mail your thoughts to Matt Plonski (mplonski@nc.rr.com)

battle. Simply assume that the Walkers have fired all of their weaponry on the turn before the first turn. The exception to this rule is the Combined Fire mode from the Mapmaker Sensor Probes, as the Mapmakers are very rarely used in such a fashion.

Chromatic Pulse Driver

Class: Electromagnetic
Modes: Pulse, Scanning

This system is a complex sensor suite used by the Walkers to study the various subtleties in the fabric of space. As one or several Chromatic Pulse orbs are ejected into an area, the launching ship records the changes to each orb as it passes through/impacts on any sort of spatial feature. The different colors denote the properties that the orbs are sensitive to. In Pulse Mode, any ship coming into contact with a Chromatic Pulse orb would take a surge of Electromagnetic-class damage.

1. If the Chromatic Pulse Driver was not fired in the previous turn, the Damage and Maximum Pulses are increased as noted on the ship control sheet.

2. The Chromatic Pulse Driver may not begin the game able to fire at the increased level.

The Walker ship can choose to switch the Chromatic Pulse Driver into Scanning Mode (decided in the Fire Determination segment of the Combat Sequence) in order to derive some information regarding enemy shield modulations.

1. If a CPD in Scanning Mode scores a successful hit on a unit operating any sort of shield system (Gravitic, EM, or other), then all Walker ships treat all such systems on any unit of the same race as **one point less** for the duration of the scenario starting in the Adjust Ship System segment.

2. A Scanning Mode CPD does not

damage to any system, and does not operate in Pulse Mode.

3. The effects are cumulative, and may eventually reduce the shield effectiveness to zero.

4. If the Walkers are facing multiple races with the same type of shield system, then the modifiers are not spread across the different races. The EM shield systems on a Minbari Whitestar are sufficiently different from those operated by the Vorlons, and would have to accumulate the modifiers separately.

For example: A Pathfinder scores a Scanning Mode hit with one CPD on a Thoughtforce, enabling the Walkers to modulate their EM systems to partially degrade the effectiveness of the Mindrider shielding. From the next turn onwards, all friendly Walker ships ignore the first point of Thought Shield on any Mindrider vessel. If that Pathfinder attempts to damage the same Thoughtforce, which had allocated 40 points of Thought Shield that arc, the Pathfinder only needs to knock down 39 points of Thought Shield before damaging the ship. The last point of Thought Shield is not destroyed, still must be allocated by the Mindrider player, and is still visible to all friendly non-Walker ships in the fleet. If the Walkers have adjusted to 6 points of Thought Shield, then all Mindrider ships will have 6 points of shield when the Walkers can hit them without penalty. An allied ship from another race will have to lower those last 6 points before being able to damage Thoughtforce. The Walkers analyze the particular shield frequencies, adjust their weapons to be more effective, and communicate that information to the rest of their fleet. It's not their fault if the non-Walker members of the fleet don't have fine-tuning capabilities on their weapons.

The Scanning Mode Chromatic Pulse Driver

can negate the effect of the Torvalus Shading Field even in *Shading Mode*. The first points of adaptation go towards the regular shield-type systems of the Shading Field. Once those have been negated, the following points apply to the profile-reduction properties granted from *Shading Mode*.

Energy Draining Field

The Walkers are fanatical about recording and mapping every single micron of space. To this end they employ a fantastic sensor suite that investigates matter and energy at the molecular level in a zone surrounding all of their ships. It is very dangerous for an insufficiently shielded ship to travel within such a zone, as the effect drains the energy out of all electrical systems.

This device produces a field of negative energy that deactivates power-consuming systems on any units approaching within a certain number of hexes from the ship. So long as the Energy Draining Field is active, any ship ending its turn inside the Energy Draining Field suffers the following effects, calculated in the Critical Hit Step of the Combat Sequence:

1. The ship loses 1d10 of the following attributes on the next turn, increased by a further 1d10 for every additional turn ended in the Energy Draining Field. The minimum any attribute can be reduced to is zero.
2. Free Thrust: If thrust is reduced to zero, the ship will be unable to maneuver unless it has some other way to acquire thrust.
3. Energy: If the ship's reactor is completely drained of power, this will force the deactivation of everything on the ship that requires energy. This includes any weapon or system with a power diamond, even if that icon contains a zero (such as missile racks)--these systems require a nominal amount of energy that would be completely drained by the field. Note that this would include a ship's jump drive and sensors!
4. Initiative: The initiative loss takes the form of an additional modifier, similar to moving at a speed of less than 5 hexes per turn. Initiative penalties produced by the field cannot exceed a total of -20.
5. The ship's total EW is reduced by 1d6 for the next turn, increased by a further 1d6 for every additional turn ended in the Energy Draining Field. The minimum total EW that a ship can have is zero.
6. Any fighter or shuttle trapped in the Energy Draining Field at the end of the turn must immediately test for drop-out on 2d10 instead of the usual 1d10, also increased by an additional 1d10 for every successive turn spent in the Field. Even if the fighter/shuttle does not drop out, it will not be able to shoot next turn, and loses initiative and free thrust in the same manner as a ship.

In addition to the above effects, the Energy Draining Field also applies a cumulative -1 targeting penalty for every hex of field between the firing ship and its target. For example, this reduces the Traveler's defensive

profile by 6 from all angles (so long as the firing ship is outside the field), but is not limited to only the Traveler. Simply trace the most direct route between the firing unit and its target, and add up the number of hexes that the targeting beam must pass through the Energy Draining Field. Apply the result as a penalty to hit. Plasma and antimatter class weapons treat every hex within the field as 2 hexes, not 1, unless operated by other First Ones.

Flash weapons are extremely sensitive to the dampening of the field. If they strike a unit located within the field they will only affect the target (collateral damage will not be scored). The first unit will still take full damage, however. This applies to First One weapons as well as the weapons of Younger Races.

Proximity weapons, such as energy mines, which land within a field hex only detonate in that hex, losing any explosion radius they might normally have. They will still cause their full damage within the target hex, affecting any unit therein. This applies to weapons operated by other First Ones as well as Younger Race technology.

Enormous units are large enough to be shielded from much of the field's effects. The modifiers are limited to the first die (-1d10 or -1d6), and do not increase with every additional round.

Other Walker ships are, of course, immune to the field's effects, and additional fields do not provide cumulative modifiers. The total targeting penalty from multiple fields is still calculated, but overlapping hexes are only counted once. If multiple Walkers are somehow allowed in the same scenario, it would be a common tactic to use several of their support vessels to screen the larger ships, forcing the enemy to target through ten or fifteen hexes of Energy Draining Field in order to hit the Walkers' flagships.

The Energy Draining Field will affect any non-Walker ship, including those of other Ancients, regardless of the desires of the Walker player (i.e., he cannot specify that it will ignore certain other ships, such as other Ancients). The Traveler can, of course, deactivate the energy field if moving amongst friendly units, but cannot deactivate some hexes (or reduce its radius of effect) without turning off the entire system. The Energy Draining Field will not affect the Vorlon planet-killer or Shadow cloud.

Critical Hits: Roll a D20 and add the number of damaged blocks. On a result of 21+, the radius of effect is reduced by one hex. The field cannot be driven below a radius of 1 hex by critical hits.

Energy Draining Mines

Class: Electromagnetic
Mode: Ballistic

When the need arises to map a particularly dangerous spatial anomaly, the Walkers deploy temporary sensor probes. They appear like the

Chromatic Pulse orbs, but are approximately four times the diameter. Targeted exactly like a Narn E-mine, they produce an Energy Draining Field, with all applicable rules, covering the destination hex and those immediately surrounding that hex (seven hexes in total). This field lasts for one turn, after which the energy of the Chromatic Pulse dissipates (in the Vortex Closure segment). This length of time is sufficient for the launching ship to record all of the information received by the Pulse. Of course, it is also possible for the Walker ships to use these temporary orbs to extend the range of their own Energy Draining Field, or to place one on an enemy ship. During the ballistic fire resolution step of the combat sequence, roll a D20 and consult the following table.

To-hit roll (D20)	Result
1-15	On target
16-20	Scatters (see below)
Scatter roll (D10)	Result
1-6	Scatters D5 hexes along the appropriate hex facing
7-10	No effect

The system is able to store mines not launched in a previous turn, up to a maximum of 3, for launching in a following turn. The full complement need not be launched in that turn, either. The weapon may not begin the game fully loaded unless the scenario specifies it before hand.

Critical hits: Roll a D20, and add the number of damaged boxes. On a result of 20+, reduce the rate of fire to 1 per 2 turns. Successive rolls continue to lengthen the recharge rate by 1 turn, to 1 per 3 turns, 1 per 4 turns, and so on.

Hangars

Three Walker vessels presented here, the Traveler, Waymarker, and Pathfinder, all use hangars to transport Mapmaker sensor probes, although this is not necessary since Mapmakers are fully self-sufficient. The Walkers never use shuttles, for none have left their ships in centuries. If it is necessary for a Walker to move from one vessel to another, it can be assumed that they do so in some extra-dimensional space where they can travel outside of their ship safely.

Medium Lightning Array
Class: Electromagnetic
Mode: Flash

Those ships whose communication needs are not as extensive; those operating from a Traveler base station or part of a multi-vessel array, are often fitted with less powerful systems. A Medium Lightning Array may fire a single shot every turn. If it doesn't fire for a turn, it may fire two shots, or combine the two into a single shot with an increased rating as shown on the SCS. The weapon is assumed to not be able to fire multiple shots at the beginning of the game unless the scenario specifies

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Hyperspace

Dreaming trails of the Ancients

Playtest details for the revised Hyperspace rules for AOG's upcoming Wars of the Ancients

Hyperspace Advancements

The dimension known as Hyperspace and its relationship to real space is highly complex. Whether one point in real space corresponds to one and only one point in Hyperspace, or if there are more involved mappings, is a subject that all races that choose to travel in Hyperspace must address. The Ancients conquered these problems millennia ago; their dimensional transitions are now a matter of course rather than a grand mystery. Scientific endeavors that daunt the younger races are accomplished without effort. For a First One race bent towards war, Hyperspace becomes just another battlefield.

The Jump Drives used by Ancient vessels are widely varied in function and form. The Vorlons open jump vortices into Hyperspace and have taught the younger races to do the same. Shadows phase in and out. The Walkers enter through their extra-dimensional gateways. Regardless of the mechanic, they are all incredibly advanced and flexible.

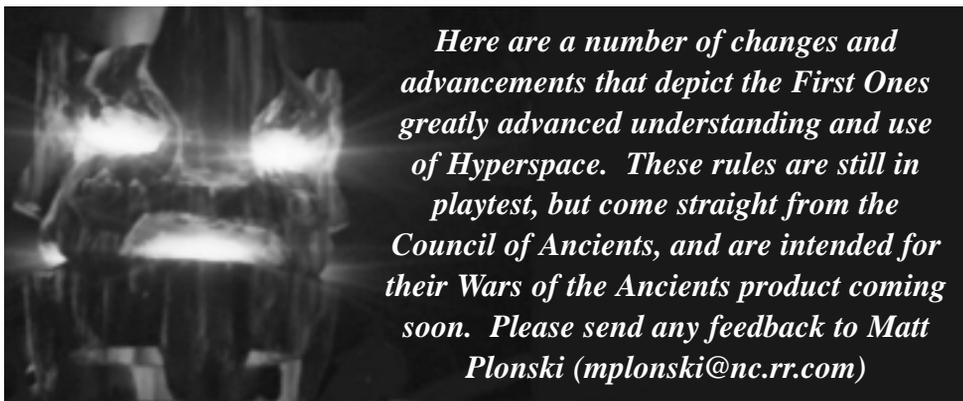
The term "jump point" refers to a literal jump point formed by the Vorlons and young races as well as to the location where a vessel with a Special Jump Drive (or something similar) transitions to another dimension.

Special Jump Drive - Reduced Jump Delay

This is an addition to the Special Jump Drive rules from Coming of the Shadows, and also applies to Shadow and Vorlon vessels, with all other rules still in effect.

It is possible for a First One ship to shunt more power to their jump drive and reduce their jump delay. Jump Engines normally produce one Jump Drive recharge point per turn, with the number of recharge points necessary to activate a Jump Drive being equal to the normal Jump Delay. For every additional application of the Special Jump Drive's required power, the amount of recharge points produced is increased by one per turn. The maximum number of Jump Drive recharge points that can be produced is 4 per turn, requiring quadruple power.

For example, a Shadow Dreadnought phases into a system and slaughters the younger race vessels present there in two turns. It receives information that a large Torvalus fleet is on the way to it's location. Shutting off a Molecular Slicer Beam, it applies 12 more power to the



Here are a number of changes and advancements that depict the First Ones greatly advanced understanding and use of Hyperspace. These rules are still in playtest, but come straight from the Council of Ancients, and are intended for their Wars of the Ancients product coming soon. Please send any feedback to Matt Plonski (mplonski@nc.rr.com)

Phasing Drive (power 4, jump delay 8). The first 4 points of additional power causes the drive to recharge at 2 recharge points per turn. The next 4 points increase the recharge rate again to 3 recharge points per turn, and the final 4 takes it to 4 recharge points per turn. Since the Dreadnought has a jump delay of 8, at the end of the next turn the Phasing Drive is fully charged, and it may begin phasing-out at the start of the following turn.

When testing for jump drive detonation on a drive that has been overcharged, the number of damaged boxes on the system is multiplied by the difference between the normal Jump Delay and the actual.

For example, there are 2 damaged boxes on the Shadow Dreadnought's phasing drive. Its Jump Delay was reduced to 4 (from 8), so it must test for detonation by rolling a D20 and adding $2 \times 4 = 8$ to the total.

First One vessels may not fire weapons during the turn that the jump will take place as is usual, unless otherwise specified (the Walkers are immune to this restriction). Shadow ships also must de-power their weapons when the transition is from real space to Hyperspace.

Hyperspace Combat

In a battle with multiple First One players, it must be established whether Hyperspace Combat will be allowed. If all players agree, then at least one separate map must be set up to account for Hyperspace travelers. For tournaments or if both players do not agree to Hyperspace Combat, Hyperspace will act as a refuge and all transitions will be "Sufficiently Far Away". No other map is necessary.

Hyperspace Transitions

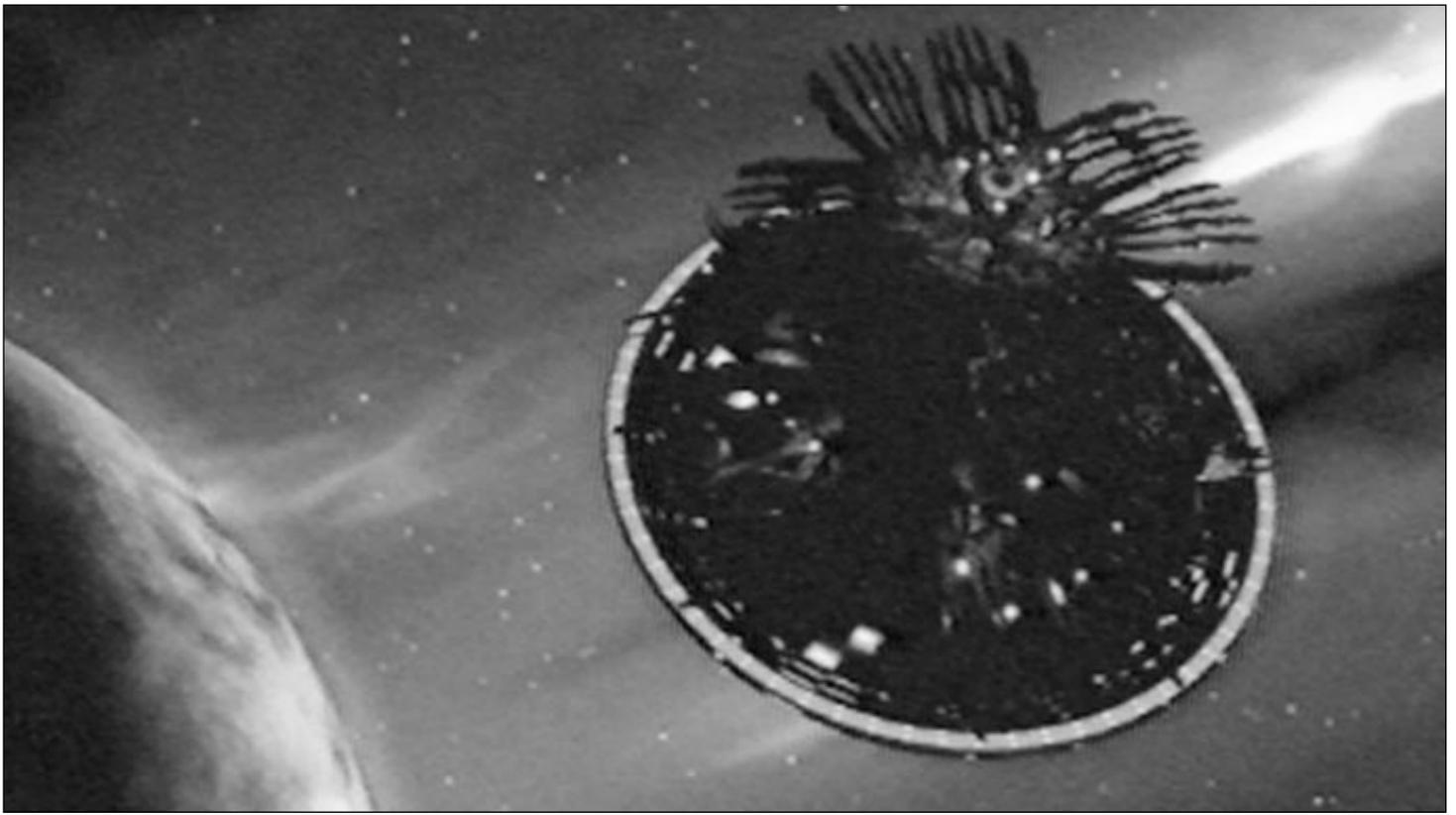
When moving from one dimension to another, the First One vessel must announce its destination at the same time as it announces the opening

of a jump point. If there is another vessel currently in the target dimension, the jumping vessel must specify whether it will move into proximity with the other vessel or if it will move "Sufficiently Far Away".

• **Proximity:** If moving into proximity with another vessel, the jumping vessel must specify a target hex and facing in the new dimension relative to the other vessel (e.g. on the same map). If able to operate sensors across the specific dimensional barriers (see Sensors Spanning Dimensions), the jumping vessel will have full knowledge of the ship position(s) in this new dimension. During the Jump Point Closure step of the combat turn, the jumping vessel fully appears in the new dimension in the target hex with the appropriate facing. It will be moving the same speed that it was at the end of the previous Movement Phase, including all appropriate pivots and rolls. Rules for firing weapons and being fired upon during Hyperspace transitions are as stated in the Rules Compendium.

• **Sufficiently Far Away:** If there are other vessels in Hyperspace that the jumping vessel desires to avoid, or if the jumping vessel is the first one to move into that dimension, the vessel may be considered "Sufficiently Far Away". In this case, only the target dimension must be announced. During the Jump Point Closure step of the combat turn, the jumping vessel is simply in the new dimension moving the speed that it was at the end of the last Movement Phase. It may be assumed that all friendly vessels move to the same location. Note that SFA locations are not exclusive to Hyperspace, and due to the complexities of the transitions there may be considered to be an infinite number of them (although this may be limited due to available playing space or if agreed upon before hand). SFA represents a distance between vessels that cannot be reasonably traversed within the scope of a B5 Wars game.

If using Hyperspace Combat rules, the first vessel to enter each SFA location is placed in the



center of the dimension map, with all following vessels entering accordingly.

For example, a battle between the Mindriders and the Shadows is using Hyperspace Combat rules. In turn 3 a damaged Shadow Cruiser moving at speed 8 decides to phase into Hyperspace, and at the end of the turn it is there, still moving speed 8. During the next turn, two Thoughtforces with fully charged Special Jump Drives decide to follow the Cruiser into its Hyperspace refuge. The Cruiser is then placed in the center of the Hyperspace map as the two Thoughtforces announce target hexes and facings (as if facing matters to a Thoughtforce). The Cruiser has the remainder of the turn to maneuver into position anticipating the Mindriders' jump points. From turn 5, combat in Hyperspace proceeds as usual. On turn 7, a Mind's Eye decides that it too should retreat to Hyperspace, but feels that it should avoid the combat between the Shadow Cruiser and the two Thoughtforces, so it announces that it will move "Sufficiently Far Away" from the three vessels. At the end of turn, the Mind's Eye is also in Hyperspace, but is so far away from the other three ships that it is unable to target them or be targeted. Having cleared up the last of the Mindrider fleet in real space (maybe they should've let the Shadow Cruiser go), a Shadow Dreadnought announces that it will enter Hyperspace. It has three choices of destinations; where the Cruiser and two Thoughtforces are, where the Mind's Eye is, or another "Sufficiently Far Away" place.

As long as there are vessels from both sides equipped with sensors capable of scanning the alternate dimension it is possible to enter and exit all locations in Hyperspace and real space as many times as desired. A battle may be considered lost if there are no vessels from a fleet on the primary battle map (where the battle began) for more than a single turn, unless specified by

the scenario. Hop-scotching through Hyperspace does not win territory!

Any Walker vessel may escape to a different set of dimensions not safely accessible to the other hyper-evolved races. Therefore a Walker vessel going "Sufficiently Far Away" must announce if it is traveling to Hyperspace or another dimension. If the latter is chosen, the vessel may not be followed into proximity except by the Triad, Lorien, and other Walker vessels.

Vessels with Special Jump Drives, Phasing Drives, or Extra-dimensional Jump Drives (all First Ones excluding Vorlons) never scatter when jumping into combat.

Vorlon vessels, due to the requirement that they must open jump points to travel between dimensions, simply announce the hex that the jump point will open in the current and following dimension. The rules for Vorlon Hyperspace travel otherwise remains the same as above, with only the timing changed.

Sensors Spanning Dimensions

A First One vessel is able to direct it's sensors into local portions of alternate dimensions, either from real space into Hyperspace or vice versa. The information gained is 100% accurate, and may be used by the Ancient to plan it's jump. However, as the nature of Hyperspace is extraordinarily complex, the definition of "local" varies. Ancient vessels may scan across dimensional boundaries as long as there are friendly vessels in the desired location or if a friendly vessel was present when an enemy vessel jumped into that location from the current game space. If a friendly vessel did not see the enemy ship leave or arrive, you will not be able to track it (assuming that it goes "Sufficiently Far Away"). Hyperspace beacons, static jump gates, and the like are always assumed to be "friendly" unless otherwise stated.

It is not possible for an Ancient to detect what location in space another Ancient came from

when it jumps in, as they have developed technology to mask the far end of a jump point. If friendly vessels are on both sides of the jump point, however, that is not necessary. A vessel with Advanced Sensors (Primordial or otherwise) may determine the start-point of any jump point created by a vessel with a standard Jump Drive.

Ancient vessels with Advanced Sensors can accurately scan into real space from Hyperspace, and from Hyperspace to real space. Primordial vessels may only scan from Hyperspace into real space with 100% accuracy, and the barrier from real to Hyperspace appears as if they are using Streib Mass Sensors. The sensors only report ship class, position, and heading. Ancient Walker vessels, the Triad, and Lorien, of course, may also scan into any number of additional dimensions.

Vessels capable of scanning into an alternate dimension may declare a target hex and issue a sensor 'ping' of a desired intensity in an attempt to detect shaded Torvalus ships when no friendly vessels are present. See the section in this volume and the Dark Matter Cloud section in the Rules Compendium for more details.

Hyperspace Reserves

A very exciting variant of the standard deployment arrives when sides are allowed to leave a portion of their fleet in Hyperspace beyond the first turn. Both sides' reserves are assumed to be "Sufficiently Far Away" and undetectable by the opponent fleet until a friendly vessel jumps from real space to Hyperspace (due to the masking technology as described above). The battle is lost when one fleet spends more than a single turn without any ships in real space. If no one jumps in at the beginning of the turn when they didn't have a vessel in real space during the previous turn, they are considered to have disengaged from the battle.

* * *

Fighting ships of the Minbari Protectorate

'B5: Rangers' Casting

THE SCI FI cable channel has officially announced some of the casting for their upcoming Babylon 5: Legend of the Rangers TV movie and backdoor pilot. According to the cabler's official website, Dylan Neal, Alex Zahara (Dark Angel), Myriam Sirois (Babylon 5), Dean Marshall, Warren T. Takeuchi, Jennie Rebecca Hogan, David Storch, Enid-Raye Adams and Gus Lynch are all on board the telefilm and perhaps even the potential TV series to follow. Previously reported to be on board the pilot Mackenzie Gray and Andreas Katsulas, the latter of which will be reprising his B5 role of G'Kar for what is likely to be for the film only.

JMS had the following to say on casting: "Just off the top of my head and in no real order... Dylan Neal is playing David Martel, our lead character, a Ranger who's come through some especially rough times; Alex Zahara is Dulann, a Minbari, his second; Myriam Sirois is Sarah Cantrell of Mars Dome One, weapons specialist; Enid Raye Adams is Firell, Minbari, a healer; Warren Takeuchi as Kitaro Sasaki of Earth, communication and translations; Dean Marshall as Malcolm Bridges, covert intelligence and infiltration; David Storch as Tafeek, Minbari, a political and first contact guy; and a Narn, Na'Feel (played by Jennie Hogan) and a Drazi, Tirk (played by Gus Lynch), both recent recruits/ members of the Rangers."

- Cinescape.com, B5LR.com

Christopher Franke returns

JMS has announced that Christopher will be composing the music for the new show. JMS was actually very subtle in announcing the news. In an email to the moderated newsgroup entitled "...by the way....", he simply states, "...did I mention that Chris Franke is doing the music for the new B5 project?"

- B5LR.com



Shipyard Supervisor

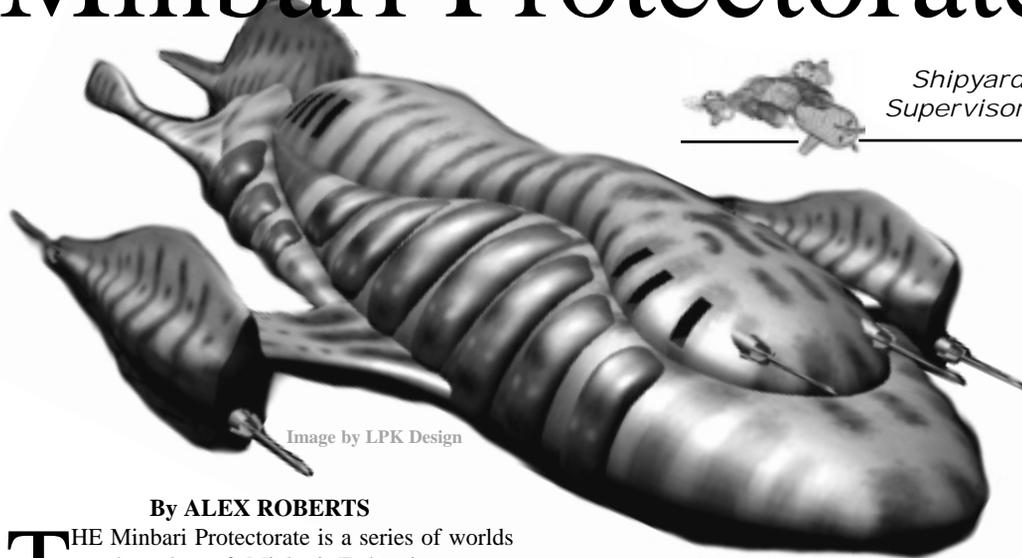


Image by LPK Design

By ALEX ROBERTS

THE Minbari Protectorate is a series of worlds on the edge of Minbari Federation space. These worlds maintain their own governments, but are under Minbari military protection in exchange for certain support and trading rights. The protectorate was formed in the aftermath of the great war 1000 years ago, where the Minbari found a number of worlds close to them so devastated by the war, that they could no longer defend themselves. Valen, with the support of the Grey Council, extended the protection of the Minbari Federation to these worlds.

Ships of the Minbari Protectorate:

The Minbari Protectorate did not have significant shipyards to construct their own hull designs. Instead, they relied on "hand me downs" from the Minbari. They also had some limited capabilities to modify ships provided to them.

Minbari Protectorate Fleet List:

Below is a description of ships in Minbari Protectorate service, as well as modifications that need to be made to allow them into Protectorate fleets.

The Protectorate cannot use regular Minbari ships, except under special circumstances, as the Protectorate is loath to ask the Minbari for help, and admit their own lack of self-sufficiency.

Ships:

Letann: Rare, No Jammer, Points = 460

Relata: (new ship): Common, No Jammer, Points = 230

Rolentha (new ship): As per SCS.

Troligan: Uncommon, No Jammer, Points = 415

Tigara: Common, No Jammer, Points = 550

Tinashi: Rare, No Jammer, Points = 375

Torotha: Common, No Jammer, Points = 200

Tradana (new ship): As per SCS

Morshin: Uncommon, No Jammer, Points = 295

Standard OSAT: Common, No Jammer, Points = 145

Norgath Starbase: Special, No Jammer, Points = 1400

Fighters:

Nial: Rare, No Jammer, Points = 80

Tishat: Common, No Jammer, Points = 60

(Any ship that can carry Nials can replace any flights

of Nials with Tishats, up to the max of the carrier. Tishats are paid for at 60 points per flight over the base cost of the ship.)

New Ships:

The following ships are new to Fleet Action, and PDF SCS's have been created.

Relata Transport:

The Relata was designed by the worker caste as a fast transport, moving critical cargo to worlds that need it. However, during wartime, the Relata was often used as a combat support ship. Although it entered service mostly as a logistics support vessel, it's strong close support weaponry gave it quite a punch up close. This is also common in Minbari service.

Rolentha Combat Tug:

The Protectorate was given a number of Rogata tugs by the Minbari Federation, as they were primarily used for construction, and then left in Protectorate space. Not able to construct their own ships, the Protectorate decided to arm a large number of their Rogatas with longer ranged weapons. The result was the Rolentha Combat Tug. The Minbari acquired or produced on their own several of these, but they were never better than rare in quantity.

Tradana Combat Frigate:

Another ship the Protectorate ended up with a number of was the Torotha. Not needing it's ground assault abilities, the Protectorate stripped the shuttles and troop accommodations, and replaced them with Neutron Lasers. Though the Protectorate did not have enough weaponry to re-arm all of their Torothas, those that were re-armed were well appreciated by Protectorate worlds. The Minbari also appreciated the abilities of the design, and even established a shipyard for their construction. However, these vessels are also rare in Minbari service, at least in the time period around 2270.

(Editors Note: Fleet Action SCS sheets for these vessels can be found at <http://www.robertshome.org/gaming/b5/fa>)

Email is no limit to initiative

Real Men PBEM
By GREG KNIAZ

SOME people complain that PBEM play doesn't allow for strategy. Since you don't use initiative and all ships move simultaneously, you can't maneuver your ship into the perfect firing position. But is that strategy? Or is it just taking advantage of an initiative roll? You didn't outthink your opponent, you just rolled higher than he did and made your decision based on hindsight.

What is initiative anyway? It's supposed to represent the maneuverability of the ship. But in reality, isn't the maneuverability of the ship already determined by the turn cost, turn delay and thruster arrangement of the ship? Given equal initiative rolls, a Medium Ship will always adapt its course faster than a Capital ship. So does it really need a bonus that lets it see its targets complete move before making its own?

The way initiative works in B5W is more akin to the tactical skill of the captain of the ship. Those who roll high have a better sense of what their opponent might do in the coming moments, while those that roll low won't have a clue. The way B5W runs now the better tactical thinkers of the fleet are manning lowly patrol boats while those of lesser skill are manning dreadnoughts. That's obviously not very realistic.

This all leads me to my point. Plotted movement allows the player who can outthink his opponent to win the majority of his battles. There is still some luck involved in weapons fire, but there is no magical initiative roll to determine how the turn will play out. You are left with your own wits. Where is my opponent most likely to go? When he goes there, where is the best place for me to be? But if I go there, will that be what he is expecting? Would he then plot to put his ship in the best place to fire on me? All of these questions go through your mind each turn. Doing something radical can completely throw off your opponent's plans.

Most people complain that plotted movement takes too long. Well first, I don't know that it does. I have seen people watch their opponent move and then spend ten minutes figuring out how they can move their ship to get into optimum firing position while at the same time plac-

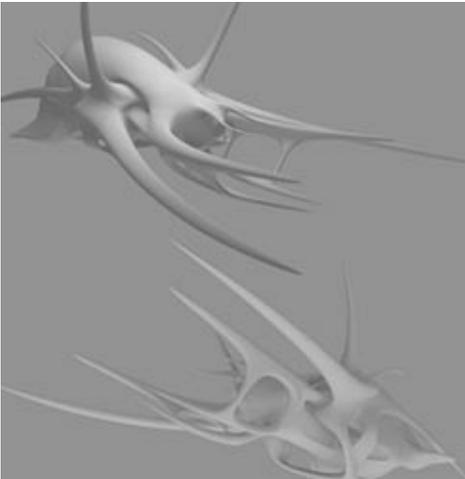
ing their ship out of the targets arcs. Secondly, this is why plotted movement works so well in PBEM games. If you take two hours figuring out your move, your opponent probably won't care.

In last year's tournament I had a Brakiri fleet matched up against a Drazi fleet. One turn I the Drazi fired at extreme range needing ones and twos to hit. Since Drazi weapons are two turn arming, he fired anyway. One shot managed to hit. I wasn't upset because I knew what my opponent was going to do next. Since he had just fired his left side weapons, he would turn his fleet to the right so that his other weapons would now bear. Knowing this, my entire fleet did an extreme move (overthrusting to do so) putting it into a position where it could still fire but my opponents charged weapons would still be out of arc. By turn 3 his fleet was mostly destroyed while mine was only slightly damaged. In a regular game of B5W, this wouldn't have happened. The Drazi Initiative rolls would have allowed him to see my plan and move off out of arc giving me a worse shot or he'd be able to compensate by making his own extreme move. All because he rolled higher than me.

Alternate Use of Initiative: If you still have your heart set on using initiative to represent the maneuverability of small ships, but still want to try plotted movement, try using the following rules. All ships should plot their moves. Roll initiative AFTER plotting movement. Move ships in initiative order. When it comes time to move a ship, it can adapt its movement according to its size. Capital ships must complete their full move, HCV's must complete $\frac{3}{4}$ of their move, MCV's and LCV's must complete $\frac{1}{2}$ of their move and fighters/shuttles must complete $\frac{1}{4}$. Once a ship has completed its required movement, it can then change the remainder of its move using whatever movement remains.

This is intended to represent a ship correcting its intended action after gaining a sense of what its opponent is going to do. The smaller ship doesn't get to know the entire move of its target before determining its own.

* * *

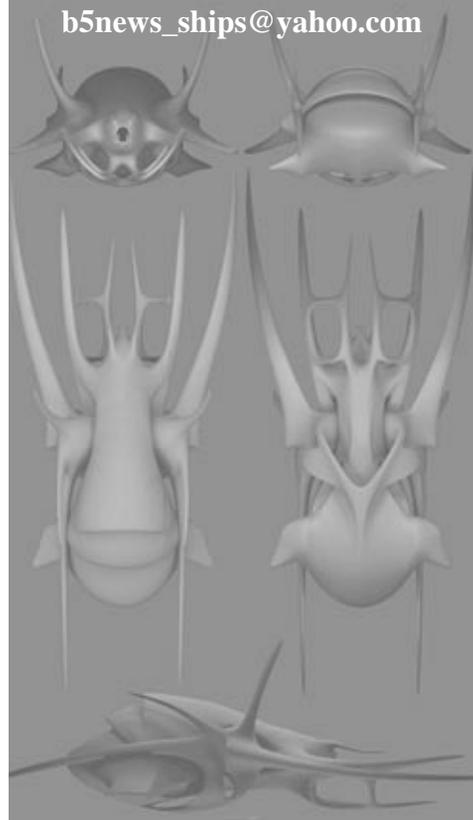


Shadow Carrier

This menacing looking ship recently appeared on the Babylon 5 Modeler's Guild discussion group. It was part of an informal competition to create new ship designs for the Ancients. Intended by its creator (Nadab) to be a Shadow supercarrier, this image presents a challenge to Babylon 5 Wars and Fleet Action fans.

We want you to design its specifications and produce an SCS. The winner will be published in Babcom. Please discuss your designs on the Shipyards Forum before submitting final proposals at the end of July.

b5news_ships@yahoo.com



Update on the creation of a new B5 legend

JMS made a post to the moderated newsgroup in May about the filming of the B5LR telemovie, offering plenty of interesting information. Here is the post:

"Well, all of last week I was in Vancouver for the first week of shooting on the two-hour TV movie *Babylon 5: Legend of the Rangers* (I'm back now for awhile.) It's been a terrific experience to date. The dailies look great. Mike Vejar is on board to direct, and is keeping the look and feel consistent with what we've done before, but at the same time (in collaboration with our new Director of Photography Henry Chan) is taking the look even a step further. The sets (courtesy of production designer Steve Gaeghan

and his band of artistic types) look more detailed, more textured, more realistic than much of what we've done before on B5. (This is in no way to diminish what we did in B5 on sets, it's just a different approach.)

Andreas Katsulas showed up mid-week as G'Kar, and despite having been away from that makeup for three years, was instantly back in character starting with the first shot and straight on through.

The cast have proven themselves excellent. It's natural to take some time to find your character, and find the lines...but from the moment they landed on set, they had their lines letter perfect, and the chemistry is there between them. SFC has seen the dailies and they're absolutely enchanted with what's on film.

I wish I had colorful stories to tell,

but we're talking here about a bunch of dedicated professionals who appreciate the legacy of B5 and are doing everything they can to make this next installment the best possible. (About the only negative thing to happen all week was my losing my California state ID midweek, which I'll have to go in to replace this week at my local DMV.) It's a very elaborate production, with everything from pyros to wire works and other stuff, in addition to the usual glut of CGI we tend to do, but so far it's all going quite well.

I've been taking digital pictures of the production which will soon be available on the SFC website...and there are some beauts there. I'll let you know when they're up.

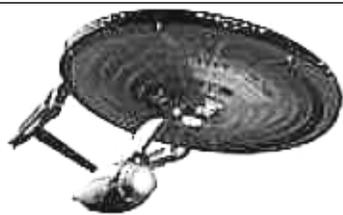
In the interim...know that the show is going extremely well, and I think that people are going to like the cast

a lot. They're good, well-trained, dedicated people. I think it's going to go over very well indeed."

In another post, which may be of interest, JMS also talked about how the music is organized.

"Chris [Franke] and I sit down to spot the movie (meaning I call out the spots, minutes/seconds/frames) where I want the music to come in and go out. I give general directions, more in terms of the emotion of the scene or my intent than in musical terms because I don't speak that particular language with any facility. On rare occasions I'll say I want a particular instrument, or a particular sound. Usually it's left to Chris, who knows what I want better than I do sometimes."

- B5LR.com



New Enterprise embarks on a Trek to explore its origins

RICK Berman, co-creator of UPN's upcoming *Star Trek* series, *Enterprise*, told the *Los Angeles Times* that the show will depict the genesis of the *Trek* universe. *Enterprise*, the fifth *Trek* series, will be set in the 22nd century, just after the invention of the warp drive and a century before the time of Capt. Kirk and the original series.

"You'll see the first guys who go out into space, the Chuck Yeagers of space exploration," Berman told the newspaper. "Fans will see all the things they recognize from *Star Trek*, but in the developmental phase."

Berman's partner and *Enterprise* co-creator Brannon Braga added that the show will allow writers to move beyond the *Trek* formula. "The formula must evolve," Braga told the *Times*. "Part of what's appealing about *Star Trek* is that people are better. ... But there have been some attempts to alter that with *Deep Space Nine* and *Voyager*, arguably darker shows. Was that a mistake? Might have been. Do we want to just go back to the *Next Generation* formula? No way. We need a show that gives us everything." Berman added, "The next season will bring a bending of the rules, without losing [Trek creator Gene] Roddenberry's vision of a hopeful, uplifting future. The Roddenberry perfection of

humanity is in the process of happening, but will be not completed when the series begins. That will enable us to do a show within the general umbrella of *Star Trek*, but eliminate some of the stumbling blocks." Braga concurred. "Deep Space Nine and *Voyager*, while both excellent shows, lost a little bit of that original *Star Trek* spirit," Braga said. "It's time to get back to the fundamentals of *Star Trek*."

SFX magazine, meanwhile, reported that crews are building new sets for the series, according to a report on the *TrekWeb* fan site. "They're definitely building up for a long run," a source told the magazine. "They need heavy-duty sets that are really big, and they're spending a lot of money on it. ... The *Voyager* sets were 'dead-stuck'. They just chopped them down and threw the pieces in the trash. [*Enterprise*] is being built from the ground up. The new engine room core set is on Stage 18. It used to be on Stage 9. It had been on Stage 9 since 1977, when they made [*Star Trek: The Motion Picture*]. It had been used from *Next Generation* through all the other shows. Until now." A source had told *SCI FI Wire* that portions of the *Voyager* sets were being cut up and recycled in part of the *Enterprise* sets; a recent visit to the Paramount lot confirmed some of the re-use.

Details of the pilot episode of the season have been turning up at *Cinescape.com*. The pilot episode is said to be titled "Broken Bow": A Klingon ship crash lands on earth and "we" try to help them get home... Something doesn't go as planned and the feud begins....

The Klingons will have bumpy heads. (Reasoning is that if Gene Roddenberry had had the \$'s they would have started out with bumpy heads..)

The character names of the series have been officially revealed. The official *Star Trek* website <http://www.startrek.com/> has posted the casting details of the series, specifically the program's characters. Here's what they say:

"As previously announced Scott Bakula will be leading the crew of the twenty-second century *Enterprise* as Captain Jonathan Archer. Rounding out his new crew will be John Billingsley as Dr. Phlox, the ship's medical officer, Jolene Blalock as the Vulcan first officer T'Pol, Dominic Keating as weapons man Malcolm Reed, Anthony Montgomery as the navigator Travis Mayweather, Linda Park as communications officer Hoshi Sato and Connor Trinneer as the engineer Charlie Tucker." *Enterprise* started production in May.

- Scifi.com, Cinescape.com

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A fan-produced
newsletters for players
of Babylon 5 Wars,
Fleet Action and
GROPOS

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End to license sets no Precedence

THE sudden and dramatic announcement that Precedence's license to produce the Babylon 5 collectable card game had not been renewed sent shockwaves rippling through the genre's fan community.

Warner Brothers declared they will not be renewing existing Babylon 5 licenses for any company until further notice.

However, Agents of Gaming is not immediately affected by this move as the wargaming company completed negotiations for its current license last year. It is valid for a further 18 months.

Warner's decision not to renew any existing licenses may be related to pending telemovie and possible follow-up television series, Legends of the Rangers, being produced in conjunction with the SciFi channel.

This addition to the Babylon 5 universe will potentially add concept, scope and continuity issues which will need to be integrated into any new products. It can also be used as a bargaining chip for increased license fees. But the action taken against Precedence gave other cause for alarm.

Warners took the extraordinary action of imposing a cease, desist and disposal order. This means that Precedence is no longer legally able to sell, design, produce or ship any Babylon 5 CCG product.

The cause for this dramatic order may possibly be found in Precedent's assumption that the license was to be renewed. The card company's existing license only



covered the rights pertaining to Crusade. However, Precedence had proceeded to design and produce an Anla'shok and Collector's Set of cards on the assumption permission would continue to be granted to use the Babylon 5 trademarks.

This was not to be the case.

AoG's Rob Glass said in a posting to the B5W mailing list that this order came as a surprise.

"The immediate cease and destroy order is somewhat of a surprise since they can't do that according to our license, but theirs must be written differently. This has no affect on us," he said.

Fears that the sudden action against Precedence may also affect AoG were heightened by an unfortunate coincidence: "Of course, then in a master stroke of bad timing (couldn't have planned it better ourselves) our website and domain name went down," Rob said.

"This was the fault of Network Solutions. As soon as it happened I contacted them and they came to the startling conclusion that they had not sent out a renewal notice to us, hence we never thought about the fact that we needed to renew it. . . I apologize to all of you for any heart-attacks, concern and so on this series of events may have inflicted upon you."

* * *

Anti-Fighter

Fleet Action anti-fighter Fire:

After all fighters have moved, determine if any fighters came within one hex of a ship with ready weapons in Anti-fighter Mode. A ship meets these criteria if those weapons spent the last pulse changing modes to Anti-fighter mode or has not yet fired in the current Turn and are eligible to fire based on their Max Shots per Turn. Each ship can fire at the fighters which came into it's own hex or any of the six surrounding hexes. It can only fire into one of these seven hexes each pulse. Determine which fighter flights passed through this hex during the movement phase and conduct fire on all of them. To determine in which order a flight of fighters will be attacked, you will have to back-track the fighters through their movement for that pulse and conduct the anti-fighter fire as the fighters pass through each designated AF hex.

- FA FAQ



Tactical Display

Attacking ships

When attacking ships, be aware of the firing arcs of enemy close in weapons. Try and maneuver to the arc with the least number of weapons.

When facing Narn Pulsar Mine equipped ships, be aware of it's every move and potential move. Keep your fighters away from it's two-hex zone of fighter death.

- Scott McGaffin

Weapons use

IF you have one turn cycling weapons, fire them if at all possible, even if you need a mere one to-hit. What do you have to lose, as they can be fired every turn? When trying to destroy a ship, use more weapons than you think will just barely destroy it. Overkill is far better than underkilling your target.

- Scott McGaffin

CLARIFICATION

In the May article, Build your own B5 battlefleets, it was stated that the total value of a Fleet Action vessel was the sum of its hull cost and its weapon cost.

Closer examination of Rob Glass's original spreadsheet has shown this to be incorrect. Instead, hull values and weapon values are inserted into the following formula:

$$\text{Total Ship cost} = (\text{Hull cost} \times 0.75) + (\text{Weapons cost} \times 1.5)$$

This eliminates much, though not all, of the gap between raw construction costs and many published vessels that had previously been attributed to playtesting corrections. A simplified version of this spreadsheet has been posted on arobert's web page to take into account this formula.

<http://www.robertshome.org/gaming/b5/fa/>