



Balbooom

DECEMBER  
2001

BABYLON 5 WARS \* GROPOS \* FLEET ACTION

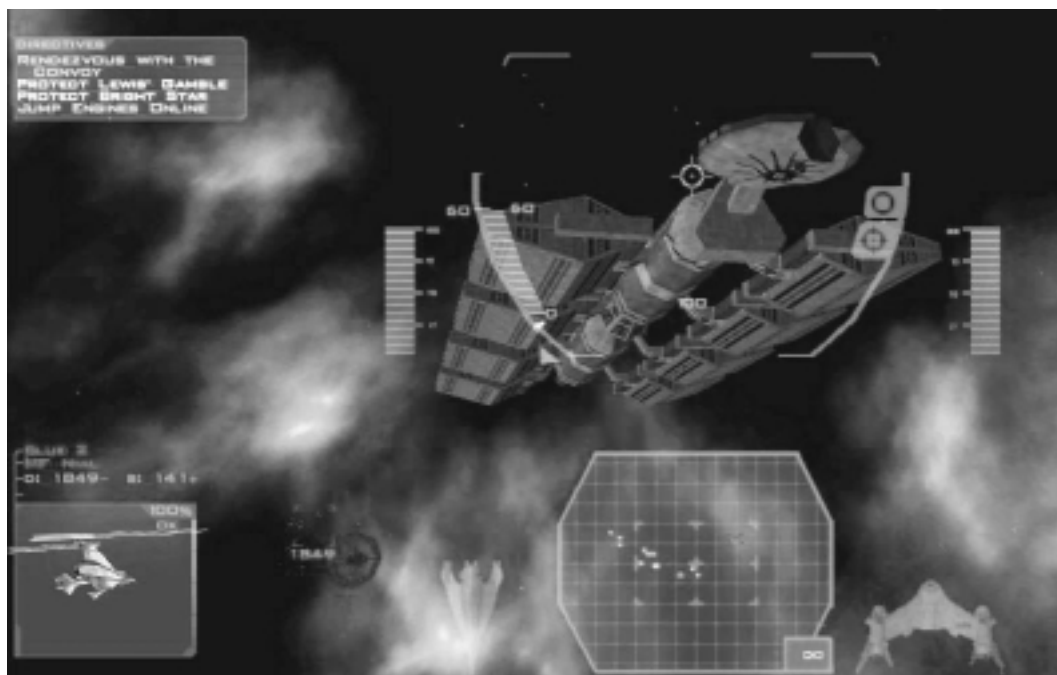
GIANTS

In the playground

# DECEMBER 2001

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# Take a flight on the wild side...

Review: **BEN RUBERY**

**W**E ALL know that Babylon Five: Into the Fire has been canned by Sierra (fairly inexplicably for a game 95% complete, with a pre-existing audience who want it, based on a hit TV series, but I imagine Sierra has a marketing department in the same way TNT have executives).

But the quest to create a Babylon 5 flight sim has survived this, with the Babylon Project, a game based on Freespace 2 (a very good game in itself).

And let's face it, we all want to see a B5 flight sim, and this one rocks.

With the ability to control a Starfury or Delta-V in the basic missions, and a variety of "unofficial" Project ships and fighters available for download, you can soon be flying Minbari Nials, Frazis, and Sentries.

The Babylon project team also plan on creating models for the Gorith and Rutarian. The models are made in Caligari truespace, and the ones included in the demo are simply excellent.

You can take on Nials with your Starfury, and Nials are faster, more heavily armed, and tougher than you. The Nial is a wonder to fly, as you watch it's weapons fire stream out faster than any other fighter, and you cut the enemy to pieces in a single salvo.

The Freespace game itself was full of potential and an incredible game in itself, beating Tachyon: the Fringe and X-wing Alliance for playability and strongly themed plot.

The B5 mod for it looks to be heading the same way. While the download for the final version could top 200 mb, if you have a good modem and can download it in sections, do so.

The first release is the Earth Minbari War demo,



which covers the last phase of the war, and includes the Battle of the Line.

My advice for those who want a realistic end to this play it on difficult setting.

Also available are a few single missions and multiplayer battles (to play your friends over the net).

While the download is enormous the models in the game are very good.

I heartily recommend this to anyone.

And I look forward to seeing the complete version, which will feature all the ships and fighters seen in the series and some of the AoG creations. The web address is :

<http://freespace.volitionwatch.com/babylon/>.

Additional files can be found with a look around the Babylon Project forums for people advertising file packs. Enjoy.

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# Take a look at the future of Fleet Action



**WIRE TAP**  
From the Agents

*Reprinted from the Announcement Forum*

A GENERAL announcement to you all, the Fleet Action 2 Playtest pack is available for download. This is the first pack and contains the core rules and the majority of the Earth Alliance fleet. Currently the fighter stats are not provided as I am still working on those. You will find, however, the current version of the new fighter rules within the pack. The link to this pack will be on the site today or you can simply type <http://www.agentsofgaming.com/FA2Playtest.zip> (this is case sensitive)

Players of FA1 will recognize a number of things in FA2. However, there are a number of definite changes to the system. Ships are not much more flexible in the way they fire their weapons thanks to changes in Fire Control rules. Smaller escorts will serve a much more important role in a fleet than they use to and specialized warships will become highly valuable. EW has been overhauled to deal with balance issues and the fighter rules have been completely revisited (and still are being revisited).

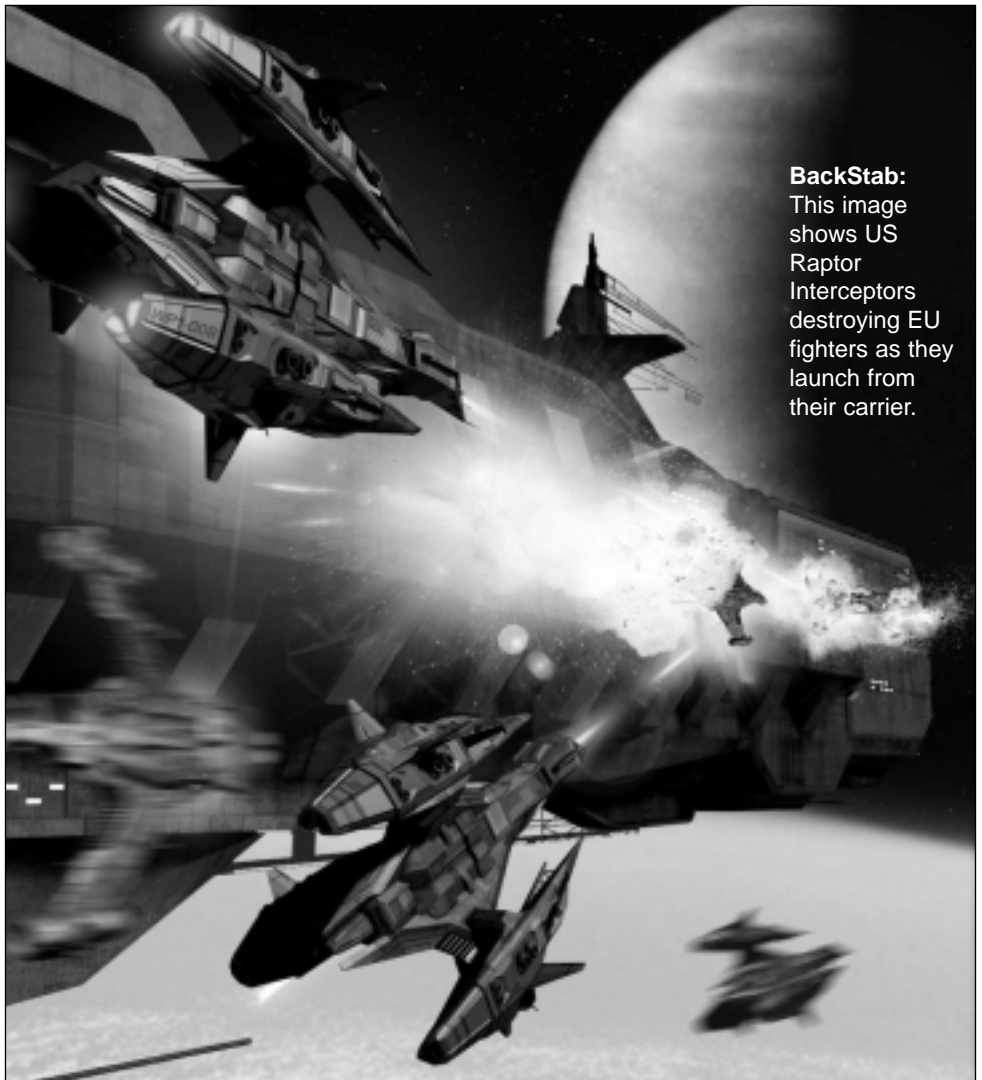
The EA ships provided have been created specifically to allow initial playtesting and do not represent the final versions of these ships. They will likely undergo a number of changes.

Shortly a second pack will also be made available. This pack will have the fighter rules and fighter stats in it.

In addition, I would like to take this opportunity to announce the inclusion of a comprehensive set of starship construction rules. This rules set will be included in the Fleet Action 2 core rule book. It is not a plug and play type construction system. Instead, players will have full control over every aspect of their ship. The basic process is as follows:

## 1) Weapon Design

Players will be able to design every aspect of



**Backstab:**  
This image shows US Raptor Interceptors destroying EU fighters as they launch from their carrier.

their weapons. Variables they have control of include damage die, # of dice, range, rate-of-fire, type, special characteristics and so on.

## 2) Hull Design

During this step players design the basic skeletal hull of their starships. This is done by first choosign a size category then adding or deleting hard points (where weapons and some equipment gets placed). The more hard points, the larger the ship's structure rating but the poorer its maneuvering.

## 3) Assembly

Finally players assemble the various weapons

and equipment on the various hulls they have created. In addition, they can add special features such of sleeker hull (lowers the defensive rating), stealth and so on.

Overall players should be able to design pretty much any starship they should wish. When this is posted I want as many of you to break the system as best you can (and I'm certain you will find problems - a system this comprehensive is going to have them).

Anyway, have a look if you wish.

- AGENT ONE



# Shadows of the mind

By BEN RUBERY

THE CERTAINTY of death is not a comforting thing. I know that I am going to go to Dorax 7, and I know I'm going to die there. And all I feel about it is a certain emptiness. I put the crew transfers through half an hour ago, before we left the depot. It'll only be afterwards they realize what I've done. White Star 14 has a skeleton crew, and I've created a few bogus reports in the computer about cross training exercises in small crews.

It doesn't change anything. Apart from a few of the bridge crew, no one knows anything about our real mission. The ones who do are sworn to secrecy.

I'm responsible for that. These people will die because I ordered them to. They are about to go into battle thinking that if they do things right, or if they're lucky, they'll be waking up tomorrow. I've taken that away. Whatever happens I've got to make sure that we don't come back from this mission. In case the crew performs above expectations, I've got to make sure that they still fail. It makes being captain a lie. My duty as a Ranger rubs against my duty to my crew. We live for the one, we die for the one. But we thought we'd have a chance.

They'll be wondering what I'm doing in my quarters for so long now, but I couldn't go without sending a message to her. That's a whole new wound. I confined her to quarters on the depot for a small mistake. Told her to meditate on it. She must resent me now. But I had to wait before I said goodbye, or she'd be here with me.

The ship seems to breathe sometimes. It's partially organic, so it must respire somehow. But there's a low hum as you walk the corridors, the hum of engines, the reactor, the small things of the ship.

The bridge is quiet. They've been waiting for me. Three minutes to target. The checks are done, and all the systems are green. It's time.

"Taskforce check in."

The rest of the White Stars check in. Twelve has a minor reactor fluctuation, but they say they'll be fine. The seconds are ticking away.

"All craft, form up on my flanks, attack pattern

phi then break and strafe when we jump in."

"Thirty seconds to beacon sir. The Shadows will have detected us by now."

"I know, but we've still got surprise, and it'll be a while before they can get reinforcements here."

"Fifteen seconds sir."

"Task force, prepare to jump on my mark." There's the waiting. It always seems longest when you know the storms about to break. You can feel the beat of every heart.

"Mark."

The base was dead ahead, and as we jumped in four black spheres fell towards us from it, bursting into fighters and coming in to intercept.

"Target fighters with pulsars, we don't want them in the way on the trip out."

The fire flowed between the fighters and us. A few hits rang on the hull, but the enemy fighters were shrinking black fragments as we moved in on the base. A red beam sliced out, and the formation broke up and down to avoid it, then moved back together.

"Fire lasers."

Eight beams hit the shadow base. The tendrils in that section start to shrivel and die as we ate into the black hull.

"Damage readout on the base?"

Ranger Nitai read it out from his station. "Its sensor power seems to have dropped by half. Energy readings have dropped as well. Some hull damage."

"Group, move in, keep targeting the damaged section and fire pulsars at will."

The White Stars looped and moved across space, strafing the damaged section. One of them was clipped by a beam from the base, and lost its ventral support and a wing. But the base was starting to die. The hull was glowing a painful yellow from the fire being poured into it, and power readings from it were continuing to fall. It tried to rotate, to hide its wound from us, but we kept on it, like fleas upon a gloss black coat. The long black tendrils across its body were starting to curl inwards. It would die soon. It was screaming in pain and we could all hear it. But it only urged us on to hurt it more.

"Lasers charged sir."

"All ships, target these co-ordinates with your lasers and fire." I typed in the location of the strongest power reading, and the group struck out once more. The Shadow base was bathed in yellow fire, screaming out in pain. Reinforcements would be here soon. It curled in upon itself like a spider presented with a lit match, and then it started to crumble.

There was a yes behind me that brought me back from the joy of victory. There was still the mission. We'd won the battle, time to play a part in winning the war.

"Any sign of enemy ships?"

"No sir." Nitai, scanning from his station, keeping his attention on the board even as the Shadow base was breaking up, not wanting to put his crewmates in danger by distracting himself from his duty.

"Condition on White Star 21?"

"Their maneuvering is impaired, and they can't jump."

"Have White Star 17 take them through a jump point."

"Sir, enemy ships, closing fast." Nitai had spotted them as soon as they had phased in.

"Order the fleet to retreat, we'll cover them."

There were 5 shadow ships. We were not going to survive, and the crew knew it. But I'd given them martyrdom for the cause, and we could save the rest of the group.

"The rest of the group is jumping sir."

"We'll need to buy them a minute or two, or the Shadows can catch them before they're safe."

"Loop the ship around, evasive pattern Eriksson alpha."

The ship moved, trying to throw the Shadows off, accelerating and decelerating, rolling, weaving, and one of the Shadow ships gave chase, while the other four spread out to cut off escape routes. They were hunting us like a pack of dogs would. It was only a matter of time, and their game would end.

We lasted 47 seconds before we lost the whole aft section. I could hear the snap of atmosphere seals coming down to seal the survivors in. Then I heard a distant rumble. It was like a storm out at sea.

\* \* \*

# Gotterdammerung: the final battle

## Map

Join 9 maps together in a three by three.

## Deployment

Select one map edge, the army of light deploys along this edge. The shadows and Vorlons deploy at the other end of the map, entering from each corner.

## Army of Light:

**Minbari:** 115 White Stars, 5 Command White Stars, 16 Sharlins, 12 Tinashis, 2 Shantavis, 4 Tigarins, 5 Tigaras, 1 Troligan, 1 Trolatta, 4 Torothas, 2 Lesaths, 360 Nials.

**Narn:** 1 Bin'Tak, 1 G'Quonth, 3 G'Quan, 1 G'Stor, 2 T'Rann, 1 Var'Nic, 1 T'Rakk, 1 T'Norr, 1 Ka'Toc, 4 Thentus, 1 Sho'Kov, 6 Sho'Kos, 1 Va'Kar, 1 Dag'Kar, all available fighters.

**Abbai:** Nakarsa CC, 4 Lakaras, 6 Bimith Defenders, 6 Tiracas, 3 Miliani Carriers, 4 Shyarie Jammer Frigates, 4 Skiatha Escort Scouts, all available Kothas.

**Brakiri:** 1 Corumai Dreadnought, 26 Avioki Cruisers, 2 Kaliva Lance Cruisers, 6 Antoph Light Cruisers, 2 Brathon Auxiliary Cruiser, 2 Halos Scouts, 16 Halik fighter killers, 1 Lykorai Supercarrier, 1 Cidikar Heavy Carrier, 2 Brokadoss Carriers, 1 Brikorta, 3 Bashnar AuxCvs, 1 Torsha Scout, 3 Ikorta, 1 Calorta, 4 Rakarta. All available fighters, 36 max Pikitos.

**Cascor:** 1 Qoccata Supercarrier, 2 Norscas, 3 Qoricc, 2 Crocti, 4 Tacacci, 1 Coqari Scout, all available fighters, max 30 Calaq.

**Drazi:** 20 Sunhawks, 20 Warbirds, 2 Stormfalcon, 1 Firefalcon, 8 Strikehawk, 3 Wareagles, 9 Stareagles, all available fighters.

**Gaim:** 1 Tiac, 1 Sulo, 2 Skassa, 3 Moas, 3 Roka, 1 Suom, 2 Rakalla (all available fighters, max 12 Kasta)

Grome: 2 Mogorta, 1 Telgar, 2 Morgat, all available fighters.

**Hyach:** Urutha Kal DN, 4 Irokai Kam, 1 Irokai Kar, 1 Tachila Kor, 3 Senchlat Kam, 1 Senchlat Kes, 8 Okath Kat, all available fighters.

**Hurr:** 3 Boroca, 2 Brokoth, 1 Tonak, 6 Orak, 1 Norek, all available fighters.

**Ipsa:** 4 Battleglobes, 1 Warsphere, 2 Carrier Cubes, 2 Battlehex, 4 Tetraship, 1 Scout Wheel, all available fighters.

**Kor-Lyans:** 3 Koskova BC, 2 Solym Missile Destroyers, 1 Raklavi Carrier, 1 Leklant Scout, all available fighters.

*Given the release of league 2 and a variety of additional shadow and Vorlon ships, **BEN RUBERY** believes it is time to redo the Corianus six scenario to include them. While the battle itself is too large to practically play on a one to one basis, there will of course be someone out there who will have the spare time and will give this a try, so the full version is included for completeness, along with some revisions to forces to give a greater variety in fleets.*

**Pak'ma'ra:** 4 Pshul'shi, 1 Pshul'tau, 3 Thar'not'ak, 10 Sim'sall'e Transports, 1 Sim'tor'ka, 6 Tra'shu'li, 1 Ar'tees, 8 Urik'Hal, 2 Urik'tal, 18 Por'fa'tis fighters.

**Torota:** 2 Golthar, 1 Toglat, 1 Clovant, 4 Atlac, 6 Tuka Fighters.

**Vree:** 1 Xonn, 12 Xill, 12 Xorr, 3 Xavan, 1 Xurr, 2 Xixx, 6 Xeel, 4 Vaarl, 1 Vaarka, 4 Xvell, all available fighters.

**EA:** 24 T-bolts (with missiles), 24 Starfuries.

**Telepaths:** 40 Telepaths of various strengths on various ships. 1 level 15 telepath must be on Sheridan's Command White Star, all other telepaths are level 5-12, and their location should be recorded.

**Mines:** there are 12 200-megaton mines in this area. Their location must be recorded, and Ancient players may not sweep for mines until at least one has detonated. They can be set off at the Army of Light player's choice.

Reinforcements: 1 Dark Knife, 1 Kirishiac Lordship, 1 Thoughtforce, 1 Traveler, 1 Triumviron. These can be called in at the Army of Light player's discretion.

**Options:** the Army of Light has 5000 points to buy officers, missiles, armed shuttles, Grome special shells etc. Sheridan's Command White Star automatically has Elite Crew, Expert Religious Leader, Expert Helmsman and Expert Engineer.

## Vorlons:

**Initial Deployment:** 1 Planet Killer, 5 Dreadnoughts, 12 Heavy Carriers, 30 Heavy Cruisers, 24 Light Cruisers, 12 Heavy Destroyers, 30 Battle Destroyers, 20 Destroyer Escorts, 16 Light Carriers, 10 Scouts, 15 Transports, 30 Assault fighters, 502 Fighters.

**Reinforcements:** 2 Planet Killers, 2 Dreadnoughts, 5 Heavy Carriers, 20 Heavy Cruisers, 16 Light Cruisers, 6 Heavy Destroyers, 18 Battle Destroyers, 12 Destroyer Escorts, 6

Light Carriers, 12 Transports, 16 Assault Fighters, 342 fighters

- Vorlon reinforcements are automatically called in when the Planet Killer in the initial deployment is destroyed.

**Options:** the Vorlons have 3000 points to spend on skin colorings and officers.

## Shadows:

**Initial Deployment:** 8 Dreadnoughts, 50 Cruisers, 12 Carriers, 24 Patrol Cruisers, 6 Strike Destroyers, 26 Destroyers, 24 Scouts, 1 Shadow Death Cloud (containing 100 missiles)

**Reinforcements:** 2 Dreadnoughts, 24 Cruisers, 8 Carriers, 16 Patrol Cruisers, 4 Strike Destroyers, 16 Destroyers, 14 Scouts, 1 Shadow Death Cloud (containing 100 missiles).

- Shadow Reinforcements are automatically called in either a) when the Vorlons call for reinforcements, or b) when Shadow forces are reduced to 50% of their original strength.

**Options:** the Shadows can spend 3000 points on enhancements and officers.

## Rules

- The optional Ancients rules are used.

## Victory Conditions:

**Vorlons:** Destroy Corianus 6. Destroy all Shadow vessels.

**Shadows:** Destroy Army of Light, destroy all Vorlon ships.

**Army of Light:** Prevent destruction of Corianus 6, destroy the Planet Killers of the Shadows and Vorlons, and force both sides to call in their reinforcements.

**Lorien's talk option:** If all players agree then the battle can be ended by Lorien's talking to the Shadows and Vorlons, and telling them off. This happens after both sides have called in their reinforcements and the Army of Light player invokes this. Otherwise it's a fight to the death.



# CORIANUS 6 SCENARIO



## Scaled-down version

Use the same map, rules and victory conditions as above.

### Army of Light:

1 Command White Star (Sheridan's command vessel), 5 White Stars, 2 Sharlins, 3 Tinashis, 1 G'Quan, 2 Sho'Kos, 2 Lakaras, 1 Bimith Defender, 3 Tiracas, 2 Aviokis, 1 Halos, 2 Antophs, 2 Halijs, 1 Brokados, 1 Bashnar, 2 Rakartas, 1 Norsca, 2 Tacacci, 1 Firefalcon, 3 Sunhawk, 1 Solarhawk, 2 Strikehawks, 4 Stareagles, 1 Tiac, 2 Roka, 1 Irokai Kam, 1 Senchlat Kam, 3 Okath Kat, 2 Battleglobes, 1 Tetraship, 1 Koskova, 1 Boroca, 2 Orak, 1 Pshul'shi, 3 Sim'sall'e, 1 Sim'tor'ka, 2 Urik'Hal, 1 Golthar, 2 Atlac, 2 Xill, 3 Xorr, 1 Xeel.

Fighters: 48 Nials, 12 Frazis, 12 Pikitos, 30 Falkosi, 12 Calaq, 12 Tiqincc, 24 Caccar, 3 Sky Serpents, 12 Starsnakes, 24 Reskas, 12 Koeths, 12 Tzymm, 12 Thunderbolts, 12 Starfuries.

All missile fighters carry a full load, and have a reload aboard their carrier, except for the T-bolts.

- Sheridan's Command white Star has a P-15 telepath and Elite Crew.

- The Fleet has 1 P-12, 2 P10s, 2 P-8s and 4 P-6s to distribute among the ships. 100 points of

special missiles may be purchased.

**Reinforcements:** 1 Dark Knife, 1 Kirishiac Lordship, 1 Thoughtforce, 1 Traveler, 1 Triumviron. These can be called in at the Army of Light player's discretion.

**Mines:** There are five 20-megaton mines placed before the game secretly by the Army of light player. The Ancient races cannot sweep the mines until one has detonated.

### Vorlons:

**Initial Forces:** 1 Planet Killer, 1 Dreadnought, 1 Heavy Carrier, 3 Heavy Cruisers, 4 Light Cruisers, 1 Heavy Destroyer, 6 Battle Destroyers, 2 Destroyer Escorts, 2 Scouts, 54 Fighters.

**Reinforcements:** 1 Planet Killer, 2 Heavy Cruisers, 2 Light Cruisers, 2 Heavy Destroyers, 1 Destroyer Escort, 1 Scout, 1 Light Carrier, 24 Fighters.

### Shadows:

**Initial Forces:** 1 Shadow Death Cloud (100 missiles) 2 Dreadnoughts, 6 Cruisers, 5 Patrol Cruisers, 2 Strike Destroyers, 6 Destroyers, 2 Scouts, 60 Fighters.

**Reinforcements:** 1 Shadow Death Cloud (100 missiles) 2 Carriers, 4 Patrol Cruisers, 2 Destroyers, 48 Fighters.

## Victory conditions

- As above.

## Notes

The small version of the battle is playable, but will still take a long time. The secret to an Army of light victory will be eliminating some enemy heavy units with the mines. The secret to an Ancient's victory will be keeping the range open and eliminating as many fighters as possible. This applies more to the Shadows than the Vorlons, who can get away with a couple of adaptive armor points in particle and destroying the assault fighters.

The key to victory will be letting your opponents destroy each other, but holding back may mean you are targeted by both opposing forces. Basically you must kill everyone, and for the Army of light, concentration of force and use of your scouts will be critical.

Alliances are forbidden, especially between Vorlons and Shadows.

For the large scenario I changed the Narn fleet to represent their rag tag status at this point, and added league 2 forces, though some of the league 2 races wanted to minimize their involvement and only sent token squadrons.

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Nuclear Mines in  
Fleet Action

By ALEX ROBERTS

Following are rules to enable FA players to use Nuclear mines in Fleet Action games.

Nuclear mines are purchased and placed similarly to the mine rules in TTV, page 6, with the following exceptions.

- 1) Nuclear mines are not purchased to cover an area. Rather, you purchase a nuclear mine, and it is placed in one hex, as per normal mine placement rules.
- 2) You may not purchase a field density of more than 1. Nuclear mines are relatively rare, and it would be very costly to cover a large area of space with them. All the fields listed below have a density of 1.
- 3) There are 4 different general types of nuclear mines. These represent tactical nukes, small nukes, medium nukes, and very large nuclear devices.
- 4) Nuclear mines, when they detonate, affect an area of multiple hexes. This is noted on the chart below. The damage from a nuclear mine is written as per example 20d10/10d10/5d10. This represents the damage at the mine's own hex/1 hex out/2 hexes out. Mines with smaller or larger radii are noted similarly.
- 5) If a nuclear mine is present within the effective radius of another nuclear mine's detonation, it is automatically destroyed.
- 6) All nuclear mines do damage as a flash weapon coming from the direction the mine was located within.
- 7) Nuclear mines are purchased with rare points. Use the following chart to purchase mines. Their effects are noted as below.

Type, Radius, Cost, Damage

1 Megaton, 0 (mine's hex only), 100, 4d8
5 Megaton, 1 hex, 225, 10d10/5d10
10 Megaton, 2 hexes, 330, 20d10/10d10/5d10
200 Megaton, 2 hexes, 530, autokill/32d10/12d8
* * *



Keeping an ace  
up the sleeve

By BEN RUBERY

ANY powers in the galaxy are known to deploy nuclear weapons, though this is mostly against ground targets (a notable example being the Centauri use of fusion bombs against Narn colonies during the Narn/Centauri conflict). However there have been occasions when nuclear weapons have been deployed in space. The most notable examples of this were the destruction of the Black Star and the use of nuclear weapons at the battle of Corianus six. Very simply when you want to blow up something very big using something very small, nuclear weapons are a handy way of doing it. Nuclear weapons are also fairly safe to use in space, as lingering radiation is dispersed by the solar wind. Here are rules for the deployment of nuclear weapons for scenario use in B5W. Nuclear weapons would be hard to point, and their cost astronomical, so they should only be used in scenarios, not pick up games.

Nuclear weapons.

Nuclear weapons cause damage in flash mode, but are allowed to overkill to the primary once all facing structure and systems have been destroyed. This is an exception to the normal rules for flash damage. Like energy mines and anti matter shredders, nuclear weapons have an area of effect. For small 1 megaton warheads this is a single hex, but for larger warheads this can be up to two or three hexes in radius. For each megaton yield a weapon has it does 50 points of damage. The radius of the blast is equal to the cube root of the weapons megaton yield. A

5 megaton warhead has the same area of effect as an emine. A one megaton warhead affects a single hex. A ten megaton warhead affects an area of radius two around a single hex. A 200 megaton warhead affects an area of three hexes around a single hex. Damage is reduced the further the unit is from the centre of the blast. The full damage of the weapon is caused in the hex it was in. The damage is halved for every hex you move away from the centre of the blast. Units inside the blast radius of a nuclear weapon that survive are moved to the edge of the blast radius facing a randomly determined direction by the shockwave from the explosion.

Example nuclear weapons:

1 megaton warhead: Damage 50 at range zero. 2 megaton warhead: Damage 100 at range zero, 50 at range one. 200 megaton warhead: Damage 10,000 at range zero, 5000 at range 1, 2500 at range 2, 1250 at range 3.

Nuclear space mines

Some players may wish to put nuclear space mines in their scenarios. These are available in one type: Proximity: Signature is equal to 5 minus the explosion radius of the mine. Hence a nuclear mine with a radius of 2 has a signature of 3. All nuclear mines are deployed with IFF systems, as no one is that stupid. Most mines also come with Command Controllers. Improved signature may not be purchased.

\* \* \*



# Do or die!

**S**HADOW vessels, especially the Cruiser and Dreadnought, have the capacity to absorb an incredible amount of firepower, without even blinking. And not only can they absorb damage, but every round they can vent some of this absorbed energy off into space, increasing their survivability.

Once their absorption limit has been reached though, their ships are quickly destroyed. This is a key point and makes Shadow vessels notably different from any other race's vessel. Most races' units lose firepower, defense capabilities, movement etc. the more damage they take. Not the Shadows. They lose nothing until they're full, then they start behaving like other races' ships. So, as the Brakiri player, what can you do to counter this invincibility? First and foremost is concentration of firepower. Do not spread firepower amongst a number of targets, especially when facing the bigger Shadow ships. Concentrate on one or two (depending on the firepower available). Keep hitting them until they die. Then you can pick a different target. When estimating how much firepower is needed to destroy a Shadow vessel, always use far more than you think you need. It is better to be safe than sorry... or dead for that matter.

Large numbers of Graviton Beams can easily accomplish this. The smaller ten point tendrils can quickly be filled up by the large damage capacity of the Graviton Beam. In fact the Brakiri main ship of the line, the Avioki, if it hits with all four Graviton Beams and does above average damage, can almost half fill up an entire side of a Shadow Cruiser. Against a smaller Shadow ship like the Destroyer or Scout, this could potentially overload the diffusers and damage the ship. And that is just one ship.

The Grav Cannon can also be used very successfully to fill up a Shadow's diffusers, mainly due to its excellent damage potential and rapid rate of fire. A single Grav Cannon can be all that is necessary to offset a Shadow vessel's venting capacity every round.

One of the hallmarks of Shadow ships is advanced, heavy armor. Because virtually all

One is a powerful ancient race and the other is merely a League power. To the Shadows, the Brakiri are but insects, so how can an insect stop a giant? To beat the Shadows a player has to know their weaknesses - to exploit them- and their strengths - to avoid or counter them.

Many of the tactics suggested here by SCOTT McGAFFIN can be used by virtually any other race to combat the Shadows. It's just a matter of adapting your race's weaponry to the Shadows' strengths and weaknesses.

the Brakiri heavy weapons operate in either raking or standard damage mode, they don't lose any potential bonuses when hitting the Shadows advanced armor like plasma and matter weapons would. Against heavily armored targets, a raking weapon such as the Graviton Beam can shine. Against a large vessel like the Cruiser with its heavy armor, not having to discount armor for a second time is very desirable. It'll fill the tendrils faster. And the Grav Cannon, even though it isn't a raking weapon, can do high enough damage to easily overwhelm the heaviest armor. One thing that should be remembered is that Graviton Beams and Grav Cannons can be intercepted.

The downside to the Graviton Beam versus the Shadows, is its long recharge time, especially considering the Shadow Slicer Beam can fire every round. In the time it takes an Avioki to cycle its Graviton Beams, a Shadow Cruiser can vent a considerable amount of damage and fire its own beam four times. Because of this a Brakiri force should include vessels that can provide firepower every turn, such as the Ikorta and Antoph, to offset the Shadows' venting capacity.

The Brakiri's main second line weapon, the Graviton Pulsar, unfortunately isn't that good versus the Shadows. Even though it can fire multiple pulses, and can potentially inflict more damage than the Grav Cannon, too many pulses are needed to surpass the heavy armor and fill up the tendrils. Once overloaded though, it's a different story as every single point can cause potentially serious harm to the vessel. The Graviton Pulsar is obviously more effective ver-

sus the smaller Shadow ships with their lower armor and diffuser capacity. Also, don't forget the Shadows do have fighters, and the Pulsar can be quite useful for combating them.

Another way to help destroy larger fighter-carrying vessels such as the Carrier, is by destroying their fighters. For every fighter destroyed, the Shadow vessel loses one point of structure.

The Shadows use three types of weapons- the Phasing Pulse Cannon, the Multiphased Cutter and the dreaded Molecular Slicer Beam. The Shadow arsenal is versatile at all ranges. Up close, the Phasing Pulse Cannon & Multiphased Cutter will be devastating to Brakiri ships, but at least their armor is taken into effect, unlike when the Slicer Beam is brought to bear. The above two weapons are perfectly capable of operating in the 10-12 hex range, a range at which the Graviton Pulsar is virtually useless. Avoid this range unless Graviton Beams and Grav Cannons can be brought to bear. It would be advisable to stay at long range where only the Slicer is really effective and the others are only marginally effective. This is a strategy that the Brakiri should use when pretty much fighting anybody, as Brakiri ships tend to be rather weak up close.

It should also be noted that unless the Destroyer and/or Scout (the only two Shadow vessels that use the Phasing Pulse Cannon and/or Multiphased Cutter), centerline their targets, only half of their weapons will hit, even one hex off can mean the difference between life and death. Also note that the Phasing Pulse Cannon and Multiphased Cutter can be intercepted.

The Molecular Slicer Beam is the epitome of



Shadow might. As a Brakiri player, you have no weapon or piece of equipment to counter it and you can't even intercept it. At full power it will pretty much destroy an Avioki instantly (assuming average damage). Even with a one turn recharge it can almost destroy an entire facing in one shot. Its damage capacity is vastly superior, its recharge rate is vastly superior and its fire control is vastly superior. So what do you have? A better range penalty. But realistically this isn't going to help as the Slicer Beam's fire control is so good that your better range penalty will only make a difference out past 60 hexes or so. That's assuming the Shadow player only allocates the same EW as you do. So then what do you have? Simple: numerical superiority. You'll never one-shot kill a Shadow Cruiser, a Destroyer or Scout maybe, but a Cruiser never. So you have to use superior numbers to beat them. Even against the cheapest ship, the Destroyer, a Brakiri player should outnumber it 2:1. You'll also have to realize that you're going to take casualties. Lots of casualties. The key is to overwhelm them. One Shadow Cruiser is worth almost four Aviokis. Sure he may kill one or two, but the combined firepower of a dozen Graviton Beams will seriously hurt a Cruiser.

Shadow vessels, with the exception of the Destroyer, have no rear firing weapons. This is where your fighters and Halik/Haltonas should aim for. While the Falkosi is virtually useless against the Cruiser (and even versus the Destroyer/Scout it's pretty feeble) the Pikitos is devastatingly effective. Its light Graviton Beam will consume tendril space at an amazing rate. But beware of Shadow fighters! This is where the Falkosi is most useful. Keep a squadron available for every flight of Shadow fighters in the battle, as you'll need at least three Falkosis to take out a single Shadow fighter in one round. Also do not leave Shadow fighters unmolested as they can hold their fire for one turn to give them three shots on the following turn, which can be quite lethal to any ship they happen to target.

While the Halik/Haltona is slightly more maneuverable than the Shadow Cruiser, its initiative bonus is superior. Use this to either stay behind them or at the very least to keep out of the arc of the Slicer Beam. Keep in mind that a good Shadow player will do his best to keep enemy units from getting behind him. Against the Destroyer/Scout you probably won't stay behind them very long, as they're more maneuverable, so make every shot count! Also launch your fighters as soon as possible as a smart Shadow player will destroy your carrier first.

If ramming is permitted, then by all means, ram! Shadow vessels' ramming factor is feeble for vessels their size. An Avioki has 1.75 times the ramming factor of a Shadow dreadnought. Even a little Halik has the same ramming factor as that of a Shadow cruiser! Even though Shadow vessels can take an amazing amount of damage, a Shadow vessel will almost always come out on the bottom (damage wise) when involved in a ram.

#### Dealing with the enemy

**Dreadnought:** This ship is scary! The first time it shoots, you could lose two ships. Hit it with lots of Graviton Beams and lots of fighters. Use at least 3-4 squadrons of Pikitos and Falkosi. At all costs kill this ship first! You

should outnumber it at least 4:1.

**Cruiser:** Same as the Dreadnought except use less Graviton Beams and fighters.

**Carrier:** Same as the Cruiser except destroy this ship before the Cruiser, as it actually is better. Killing all its fighters will cause considerable pain to its pilot and damage to its structure.

**Destroyer:** Do not ignore this ship, as it is quite capable of mulching your ships. Kill it at long range if possible. Intercept the Phasing Pulse Cannon first. Beware of sending fighters to take out this ship, as the Multiphased Cutter will mow your fighters down easily.

**Scout:** Kill this ship at long range. It will probably avoid closing as its firepower is pretty much close in only and is rather poor. One squadron of Pikitos can easily wreck this ship. Even one Avioki can cause it considerable harm.

#### Ship Capabilities

**Avioki:** A staple of any Brakiri fleet, the Avioki is a relatively decent ship that is quite effective versus the Shadows at mid to long ranges. Four Graviton Beams are quite capable of soaking up diffuser space.

**Kaliva:** Same as the Avioki except it gets the added benefit of a superior range penalty and a sustained shot when the Gravitic Lance is fired, although a Shadow player will more than likely kill it if he doesn't have a better target.

**Cidikar:** The best Brakiri carrier to bring as it can disgorge a squadron of light and heavy fighters in one round. Hopefully it will survive the firing phase to do this though. Once launched, close to point blank. The Cidikar is one of the better Brakiri close-in ships, due to its eight Graviton Pulsars.

**Brokados:** Carries Pikitos heavy fighters and it has four Heavy Lasers. To take down a Shadow ship, you need heavy firepower and/or fighters, the Brokados has both of these

**Halik:** A definite must have. Able to chew through Shadow fighters, it can bring a considerable amount of point blank firepower to bear. One of the very few Brakiri ships that can out maneuver a Shadow Cruiser and stay in its rear arc.

**Haltona:** Like the Halik except it can bring heavy firepower to bear in the rear arc. Take a Haltona before a Halik, unless large numbers of Shadow fighters are expected.

**Lykorai:** No real effective offensive capabilities, but if it can launch all five fighter squadrons...

**Tashkat:** You can't lose with a Tashkat. It has better all round firepower than the Avioki and it has Gravitic Shifters to rotate Slicer equipped vessels out of arc. Remember the Shifter fires before regular weapons fire.

**Antoph:** Brings a Graviton Beam and two rapid firing Grav Cannons to the fray. Though not as potentially damaging as an Avioki, the Grav Cannon can fire every round.

**Rakorta:** A cheap little ship that carries a decent amount of firepower. Choose either the Grav Cannon or Medium Laser model. Operate in small attack groups.

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## Shadow Half-Phasing for FA

By Alex Roberts

Almost anyone who has played the Shadows in Fleet Action can agree that the Half Phasing rules are poorly thought out, and taken literally, severely broken. The below house rule not only brings the Shadow's Half Phasing back in line with B5W, but more importantly, makes the Shadows once again playable.

#### Half Phasing (Revision)

Half Phasing may be declared at the beginning of any pulse, before any ship moves. It does not need to be pre-plotted. Any Shadow vessel Half Phasing gains a +4 def versus ballistics, and +2 versus regular weapons. While half phased, the Shadow Player must add +6 to the defense of any ships it fires upon. The Shadow vessel may phase back in at the beginning of any pulse after it phased out.

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## New Vorlon and Shadow vessels for FA

By Alex Roberts

#### Shadow Strike Destroyer:

Equipped with 2 Molecular Slicers, this upgrade of the standard Shadow Destroyer allows it to go toe to toe with enemy Capital ships.

#### Vorlon Asteroid Defense Grid:

Stationed around the Vorlon border and important facilities, the Asteroid Defense Grid is a terrifying obstacle, equipped with powerful Lightning Cannons and Discharge Guns.

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# Survival of the fittest

TACTICS  
By ALEX  
KETTLE

**W**HO doesn't love the Shadows - The ultimate 'bad guy,' romping across the galaxy every 1000 years or so spreading their own brand of chaos.

But as a race in B5Wars, they are a fleet that can either crush all who oppose them or find themselves in way over their heads and fleeing the battle. Finding the right combination can be tricky, but is most rewarding.

The biggest strengths for the Shadows come from their awesome weapons and unique energy diffusers. In the Molecular Slicer Beam you get a weapon that can literally slice through your enemies, ignoring their armor no matter how tough. But with the energy diffusers you gain a system that allows you to absorb huge amounts of damage without ever taking a single point of lasting damage, and then just releasing it off into space. These two rather unique advantages make the Shadows not only one of the most fun races to play, but also amongst the most dangerous.

## STAGES OF BATTLE

As a Shadow player, you should always look to control the battle. Here are the most common steps.

**1 Opening move:** As the game begins you have just entered the map or phased in, you should keep your speed fairly high to utilize your superior mobility to outflank and out run your opponents. At this point you are at long range from your opponents, and while your weapons aren't particularly long ranged, you will have superior EW, use it! Go offensive on the biggest threats in the enemy fleet, picking out targets that can do a high amount of standard damage first, they will be the biggest threats later on. Your initial strikes with fully charged Slicers could easily prove the most devastating,

eliminating key enemy ships. Don't worry about the odd enemy shots that may hit at this range, take it to your diffusers then simply turn that side away and drain it off.

**2 The Run:** Now comes decision time. If the enemy has large numbers of ballistic weapons in range this turn you may wish to half-phase and run the gauntlet. Otherwise you need to consider your opponents- it could well be worth your while to continue picking at the enemy with weaker shots keeping some EW on defense to make it harder on your enemy. It's important to remember that your opponent will want to make every shot count so will probably go mostly offensive, meaning you can use more on defensive and still get those hits. Your lighter ships should be used to help eliminate any light ships or fighters that try to close on your cruisers as you pass the enemy fleet.

**3 The circle:** Having passed your opponents forces circle out and around draining your diffusers, in this stage you are most vulnerable to lighter enemy ships getting into your blind spot. Once again your destroyers can save you a great deal of trouble, following up and using their extreme maneuverability to remove any pursuers. Now it's simply a case of 'rinse and repeat' until the enemy fleet is nothing but debris.

Again not every battle will go this way, but this should be the most common as it maximizes your strengths while helping to hide your biggest weakness- staying power.

## ENERGY DIFFUSERS:

Your energy diffusers are an integral part of your ships, and need to be included in your planning, as they are a limited resource.

When engaging any fleet it's crucial to remember that you lack staying power, while your diffusers can absorb tremendous amounts of damage, they can't do it forever... It takes time to diffuse damage they've taken and if you are attacked there again you can quickly find yourself taking critical amounts of damage, with so little backing up the diffusers even small amounts of damage are potentially devastating.

If facing groups of enemy ships, always try to take them head on, with a portion to either side of your centerline. This will allow you to bring in both sets of diffusers and double your chances of surviving their attack.

If the diffusers are ever becoming critically full, half-phase and move away, opening the range and going on the defensive to give yourself a chance to get rid of some of the damage.

## PICKING THE TARGETS:

With the Shadows as with the Vorlons, choosing the targets you engage makes a huge difference in how a battle will develop. The biggest threats to any Shadow are ships with weapons that cause large chunks of standard damage, as these will be the toughest to deal with in your diffusers. With your initial strike you will be doing a huge chunk of damage to whatever target you pick, so picking on a big ship is probably a good idea. With your subsequent shots however, you will find your greatest benefit from removing ships like the Demos, small ships with powerful standard mode weapons as groups of these will quickly overwhelm your diffusing ability, while larger ships with more varied weapons may hit you hard, you can easily turn a



weak side away from them, small ships can harass that side over and over safely out of arc of your weapons.

## SHADOW SHIPS:

**Battlecruiser:** A primordial version of the Shadow warships this ship is by far one of the most dangerous your opponent will ever face. Limited in use by the primordial restriction, it carries not only a more powerful weapon, but 3 diffusers and a massive number of tendrils per side, allowing it to do crippling strikes and literally ignore all but the most powerful hits. And on top of it all it also can carry a full 24 fighters. Its high points cost will make it a tough choice to add to your fleet, but in any high points game (recommend 10,000+) this ship will make the ideal flagship for your squadron, using its massive Heavy Molecular Slicer to systematically destroy the enemies key ships. This ship also has a unique arc for its beam, being able to fire front and back, allowing this ship to hit targets both coming and going. This is a Primordial ship, from the time when Shadows took their time growing ships and controlled them themselves, and it shows, this should be the 'terror' ship of a fleet, then when your enemy is all wound up with trying to kill it, use the rest of your fleet to demonstrate their error. It's also worth noting here the unique advantage of the Heavy Molecular Slicer Beam - when fired with a full charge this weapon does damage in piercing (standard), this means that you do piercing but any overkill will now actually carry over to structure instead of being ignored. This ability is of huge advantage and easily turns this weapon

into one of the more dangerous in the game.

**Dreadnought:** The largest expression of the newer living Shadow ships, the Dreadnought carries a pair of the powerful Molecular Slicer beams aligned on the center line with broad arcs to either side allowing this monster to effectively engage enemies on either side at once. It suffers from the common lack of rear defences found on the smaller ships.

With its massive diffusers this ship can absorb tremendous amounts of damage without suffering any ill-effects, so don't be afraid to pick out your opponents biggest ships or even a couple and engage them, making sure to split the return fire between sides.

Despite its large size and firepower this ship remains almost as maneuverable as smaller Shadow vessels, capable of making two turns at speeds up to 8. With a speed advantage like this you can easily make quick turns in the middle of a battle usually taking an enemy by surprise.

And don't forget, when the battle's won and your opponent tries to escape, don't let those ships go free- use your two Vortex Disruptors to get that final kill. On top of everything else it even carries two flights of the exceptional Shadow fighters, best used to help defend the Dreadnought or with other flights actively hunting down enemy attack fighters. What more could you ask for?

**Cruiser:** The most famous of the Shadow ships, this powerful vessel is not only highly maneuverable, but packs a serious punch with its single Molecular Slicer Beam.

To make the most of these ships use them in small groups of 2-3 where they can cover each

other's back and side arcs where they carry no weapons. After engaging separate targets with their full strength shots, try firing their weak beams as a group, either removing cripples or destroying other high-priority targets.

With only a single flight of fighters available, it is usually best to group the fighters from a group of cruisers together and use them as a single squadron for the whole group, taking on enemy attack fighters before they can move into position. If you are fighting a fighter light opponent, use the fighters in groups to move in on enemy ships that have taken hits but survived.

**Carrier:** In all respects a virtual twin to the Cruiser, this vessel instead carries 24 Shadow Fighters. If you are using large numbers of the smaller Shadow vessels then this is an ideal way to bring a large number of fighters in to the battle quickly. Ideally when used correctly even a few flights of Shadow fighters will make a huge difference, the fact that this ship can launch a fighter bomb then move into battle as a Cruiser makes this ship all the more dangerous.

**Patrol Cruiser:** The smallest of the Shadow 'Cruiser' ships, it is also the cheapest ship in the fleet. The first Shadow ship under 1000 points, it gives you the option to start building a fleet with large numbers of ships, instead of relying on the power of a few of the larger ships. On its own this is a fairly weak ship, mounting a single light Molecular Slicer Beam, and with only moderate diffuser and tendrill ability, it can be quickly overwhelmed. Its true strength comes when used in packs. A hunter pack of 3 of these ships can cause mass havoc in any battle hunting down fast enemy ships and fighters and making light-



ning fast hit and run attacks against enemy heavies. With the ability to make a turn at speeds of up to 30, it can move around in support of other ships like no other. Always be aware that this ship has the speed and maneuverability to not only strike on its own, but support your destroyers as well. Used carefully in packs these ships can easily help you control a battle, forcing your opponent to cover his flanks and rear or be surprised by a quick attack.

**Destroyer:** The smallest and most agile of the Shadow warships, it also carries a more unusual armament. Equipped with a pair of Multiphased Cutters, a powerful and efficient anti-fighter weapon, as well as two Heavy Phasing Pulse Cannons. The HPPC is a unique weapon for the Shadows, in that it actually has a 1 per 3 turn recharge with no faster rate of fire available. Its damage however makes it a dangerous weapon, capable of removing huge chunks of structure with a few hits, and most important of all ignoring non-EM shields along with any other shield-like energy field (Particle Impeders and Energy Webs for example) making the Destroyer all the more dangerous to the higher tech young races. With its extreme mobility and heavy arsenal, this ship excels at hit and run attacks, striking before moving off to recharge its Pulse Cannons, and acting as escort, removing enemy fighters from around the Shadow capitals. What this ship cannot do is stand up against heavy warships on its own- while maneuverable and powerful it has a weak structure with limited diffuser ability, and cannot take many heavy weapons hits before suffering damage. Use these ships as hit and run attackers, skirmishers and escorts. With its high maneuverability it can get into the weak arcs of crippled ships and finish them off, or when in trouble, run interference for your heavier ships while they recharge...the threat of a Destroyer group is often enough to scare off pursuit.

**Scout:** Based on the Destroyer, this ship has a powerful EW suite, but is very limited in its defenses mounting only a pair of Medium Phasing Pulse Cannons which lack the arcs to cover the rear. While a very fast and agile scout, it retains the weakness of the Destroyer to heavy weapons and so is best used to carefully support the fleet either with blanket DEW or to help with specific attacks when not in danger itself. With its high speed it makes a very tough ship to catch and can easily run away from danger if pressed, but it's a high price to pay for a ship that may need to run from danger all the time or use its EW to protect itself first. Be careful with its use and always have something ready to support it.

## ENHANCEMENTS:

**Primordial** - If allowed, the Primordial upgrade for Shadow warships (HCV or larger) is an absolute must have. For the relatively minor cost of 20% of a ships combat value you gain incredible enhancements, the most powerful of which is the Heavy Molecular Slicer Beam, suddenly you gain incredible firepower and immunity to telepaths. When considering how to spend points in a battle, this would have to be

one of the biggest considerations for any player. The upgraded weapons can turn a Shadow Dreadnought into a true terror, not to mention the effect on Patrol Cruisers- you gain an HCV with the firepower of a Shadow Cruiser. If any enhancements are allowed this is the first one you should always take.

**Increased Diffuser Capability and Additional Tendrils-** These two go hand in hand, allowing you to create ships that can not only absorb more damage but diffuse it off faster as well. When creating fleets for larger battles, it is always worth considering using a few extra points to bump up a couple of your ships especially as a nasty surprise for a carefully planning enemy. Many opponents will take pains to learn exactly how much damage it will take to kill off a Shadow cruiser, add a few extra tendrils and suddenly they're in for a nasty surprise. Add some extra diffuser capability and suddenly that cruiser can drain off its damage much quicker, getting it back in the action all the sooner, again a nasty surprise against a carefully planning opponent. But when it comes right down to it- if the points are available, the Primordial option is a better one and should be considered first.

## TACTICS:

**EW** - A hint on EW, often with such high EW the temptation is to split it or go all out and make sure you hit your targets. While an all OEW may work at extreme ranges, as you close the enemy will be more likely to go all OEW here's why. When most players of younger race ships see the amount of EW Ancients can generate they tend to get nervous, and fearing that they may miss with their heavy weapons (which tend to have slow ROFs) they will go all offensive to help ensure they hit, with the target now defenseless you can easily put 1 point into a lock and go all defensive. The lack of DEW on the targets and your naturally high offensive bonus will help get those hits, while your superior DEW will help to block their offensive targeting, giving them overall penalties to hit you. It's a simple tactic, but one that will catch most players the first time they face you, a clever opponent will learn from the battle and be ready next time at which point you can vary your EW to really mess them up!

The variations allowed with the Shadow fleet also allow for a huge number of tactics, and to be truly successful you must change how you fight as the battle flows and against different opponents.

Some of the most basic tactics for the Shadows are the 'Hit-and-Fade', 'Wave', and 'Snipe Hunt'.

**Hit-and-Fade:** The most common of the tactics for the Shadows, this one goes exactly as it sounds. Use your superior mobility to haunt around the outside of enemy fleets, rush in strike and pull back to dissipate any damage you have taken. Take care to always pick at the edges of the enemy fleet, you have fair range and good EW use them to pick away at the enemy picket ships. Use your faster ships and destroyers to engage and destroy any faster enemy ships that move to engage you, don't become pinned down

in any battles, break away to stay mobile. Especially important is to keep your fighters close to engage any enemy assault fighters before they get a chance to strike.

**Wave:** The wave attack is dependant on you having a fair number of ships to work with, and as such is best used in larger battles. The idea is simple, a group of your ships move ahead of the rest and launch an attack on the enemy fleet in a move similar to the 'Hit-and-Fade', when the enemy turns to engage that group, your second unit rushes in to launch a strike, picking off cripples or just killing off fresh ships then backing off in the opposite direction from the first group. The beauty of this attack is that your opponent has to worry about two fast moving powerful groups while you can move about and harass him from different directions. If they split up you will have chances to hit an enemy group from behind, if they stick together, again they'll be concentrating on one of your groups, the other can launch attacks against their rear, quickly removing the biggest threats.

**Snipe Hunt:** This is a favorite tactic and one that has varied success, either an opponent will go for it or not (hope they don't read this too). The basic idea is to give the enemy a nice juicy target to chase, usually a Battlecruiser or Dreadnought (in smaller battles or if you have a lot of destroyers and patrol cruisers then a normal cruiser will do). Launch your strike at long range then move at high speed at an angle to the side of the enemy fleet as if you were moving to open the range and circle behind them- it's important that the rest of your group keep back and fairly quiet at this point- half phasing is a good idea for them. If the enemy takes the bait they'll see a nice big juicy target out on its own and relatively easy to get to and attack so they'll go after it. If you start to take too many hits, half-phase and keep running (a Battlecruiser works best here because it has an aft arc, you can actually take pot shots at pursuers)- remember to keep running like you're afraid for the ship to help maintain the illusion of vulnerability. During this pursuit you move your fleet into position to ambush him, it helps to move after the enemy like you can't keep up etc. and take pot shots to try and 'pull them off' but once you're ready (here's the trick) the enemy should have the main ship targeted with everything- move it through the rest of your fleet, the enemy either chases or runs, either way they're caught with their attention in the wrong place freeing you to trounce them. As mentioned before the only way to make this work is to get your opponent overly worked up and concentrating on killing that one main ship until it's too late. If you plan to use this kind of tactic, a Battlecruiser will be your best bet, first for its sheer power- lots of diffusers and tendrils, and second for its rear arc allowing you to antagonize any pursuers. It's exactly this kind of situation where you should consider putting additional tendrils and diffuser capability on your 'Snipe' - happy hunting!

\* \* \*

# Fighting over the scraps...

## For FLEET ACTION

IT IS the year of the Great Shadow War, Sheridan's Army of Light is continuing its great Crusade against the Shadows and the Vorlons. In Hyperspace 3 squadrons of White Stars come upon a Shadow Outpost, an ancient Regeneration Base, in the bloody battle that ensues almost a dozen Whitestars are destroyed, thrown back when more Shadow Vessels arrive. A menacing Shadow Cruiser mates to the Base, easing its pain and moving it across space to a safer place where it can heal itself. Before arriving at its unknown destination however the Cruiser which is carrying it is itself called away on a mission of far more importance; to face the Vorlons....."

In the battle which follows the Cruiser is destroyed and all of the Ancients leave known space to head out beyond the rim, all of them that is apart from a few scattered remnants, remnants like the lost Regeneration Base....

It is 2267, the Centauri have retreated behind their borders and the ISA is bringing peace and stability to all corners of the galaxy. Emperor Mollari has received new instruction from his Masters, he is to send a Fleet of his best vessels to a remote system, well outside Centauri space, near the Narn Worlds, there they have to ascertain if the Regeneration Base still exists, and if it can be salvaged.... Reluctantly, through a drunken stupor, Mollari gives the orders.....

A Narn listening post, one of a great many that the Narn maintain just outside of Centauri space, detects a large and powerful fleet of Centauri moving through Hyperspace, heading toward Narn-space. Hurriedly, anxiously, they dispatch a probe that makes its way at top speed toward a Narn military installation. With great haste, and even greater fear the Narn Regime cobble together a force capable of facing the Centauri invaders, based around their newest Bin'Tak, "The Eye of G'Kar".

As the probe launches from the Narn listening post it triggers a series of events. Another probe, silent and invisible, far more advanced than the Narn activates and sends out a silent pulse, forewarning the Whitestar fleet of what is transpiring.

Like the pieces of a chessboard the players assemble, each congregating on an empty system, devoid of light it does not even have a sun. It does however, have shadows.....



## Frontline scenarios

By MARK WALLACE

### Setup & Scenario

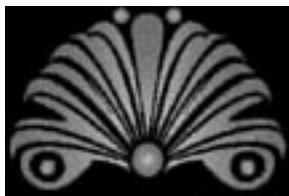
This scenario is large and has several factors that would be more easily facilitated by a Gamemaster. Later on in the game however a GM will have the opportunity to join in himself and have some fun. The forces involved are so large that you may find you need more than 1 player to control them or supply the miniatures.

The Ships of the 3 fleets are listed below, there are special rules governing placement, timing, etc. So, if you are not intending on GMing this scenario please don't read on, as it will spoil your enjoyment, simply read your Race's orders.

**Centauri Orders:** Your family is one of the strongest lines in Centauri space, in recent years Emperor Mollari has been acting a little strange-

ly but then all of the recent Emperors have been less than stable. You simply know that your families' star is on the rise and that you are currently in charge of a mighty fleet of Centauri vessels, including some of the most advanced ships ever fielded by your people. Your orders are simple, almost too simple. There is an old base, abandoned long ago by an unknown alien species. The Emperor has given you the glory of recovering this for your people, the fact that it lies within Narn territory only heightens the glory that you will receive when you take it from them. You have brought along several troop carrying vessels and can use these to board and capture the station. Once it is secure you will bring in engineers to disassemble it and remove it to the safety of the Centauri, and away from the Narn dogs who do not deserve such a prize. You are aware that the meddling Interstellar Alliance may attempt to interfere and are prepared to face them down, you even have an idea that their interference may work to your advantage. And,





## CENTAURI ORDER OF BATTLE

### Cmd Squadron

Lord-Admiral Kuri Buriani

1 x Octurion

2 x Sulust

1 x Covran

1 x Secundus

### Squadron 2

3 x Altarian

### Squadron 3

1 x Balvarin

1 x Covran

3 x Darmoti

1 x Maximus

### Squadron 4

4 x Vorchan

### Squadron 5

1 x Primus

2 x Secundus

### Special Forces

Captain Naan Buriani, Political  
Clout, Improved Command  
Network

4 x Dargans

*\*These begin the game posing  
as 4 Whitestars, as per the  
Dargan special rules.*

### Fighters

8 flights x Rutarian Fighters

18 flights x Sentri Fighters

6 flights x Larisi

should any Narn make an appearance, this is a bonus.

**Narn Orders:** The Centauri have remained silent for too long, you can never trust a Centauri, even a quiet one. Now, in typical pirate fashion they dare to come cruising out of Centauri space and into Narn territory. They will be stopped. By any means. Nobody can prevent you from wiping out this unwarranted incursion and you will be successful. Your only orders are to destroy all of the Centauri vessels and prevent them from ever returning to menace your people. You have hurriedly assembled a strong fleet and have calculated that the Centauri are stopping in a dead system, you have no idea what they want here but this is where they will die! You have taken the foresight of having a small squadron of Troop carriers along in case they attempt to set up a base of operations here.

**ISA Orders:** Well, after years of isolation the Centauri are out in force, heading for Narn territory. This could well spark off another war between these 2 spacefaring races. The Narn are almost back to their full strength militarily and are keen to prove that they are a force to be reckoned with. The Centauri? They're anybody's guess. You are commanding 3 Whitestar Squadrons which are proceeding to the point where the 2 fleets will meet at top speed, you may miss the start of the fight if you don't hurry but there's no way you miss the finish. You've even called in some heavier guns should you need them, they'll get there a little after you arrive. Your orders are simple, prevent the 2 fleets from destroying each other and enforce the peace.

#### Fleet Setup

You'll need a large playing surface for this battle, the forces are arrayed in a diamond formation to begin with. The "top" of the diamond is the Shadow Regeneration base, sitting dead in space. This is the objective for the Centauri, and will quickly become the objective for the Narn. To one side are the Narn, their closest ship no nearer than 30 hexes from the Station. To the other are the Centauri, again no nearer than 30 hexes from the Station. 1 solo squadron of Whitestars begins at the "bottom" of the diamond, a mere 20 hexes from the station and sandwiched in between the opposing fleets.

#### Capturing the base

Inform both fleets that they have numerous troop carrying capital ships, each of these is also carrying troop carriers of their own. If they launch all of these troop carriers they can dock with and board the station to capture it. The more carriers launched the more chance of getting one through. Tell them that the side with the most marines onboard will win the station at the end of the game. In other words, lie to them! Once the base activates tell both the Narn and Centauri that it must be reduced to below 5

structure on the main body, this will "kill it" and allow them to capture it unopposed. Either that or getting more and more marines on board it, as each point of marines boards the station get the player to roll a dice, you roll a dice in secret and shake your head. Tell them that they are not successful yet but should be wearing it down.

#### Turn 1

This is how the game begins in Turn 1. The GM should read the following to the Narn:

"You have come out of Jump into the dead system, to your amazement there is a huge starbase already there. At first you suspect that the Centauri have been here already but quickly realise that it is not of Centauri origin. You fought with the Army of Light and recognise it for what it is, a Shadow base. Such a base must not fall into the hands of the Centauri, but should you capture it the Narn would learn much from its construction and weaponry. As you arrange your fleet for battle a series of Jumpgates appear as 4 vessels jump in. Your sensors identify them as ISA Whitestars, they are hailing you."

**Note:** These are actually Dargans that are utilising their technology to masquerade as Whitestars. The ISA Player gets to pretend at this point that they are his ships. They are ordering the Narn to stand down and withdraw. There are signals going to the Centauri but the Narn cannot intercept these.

**Narn Special Rules;** Regardless of whether the Narn player decides to hold position, fall back or whatever, he must roll on the following chart for Pulse 1 to decide what his ships will actually do. He activates each squadron in turn and rolls for their reaction. He can then plot movement, firing, etc as normal within the criteria set down below:

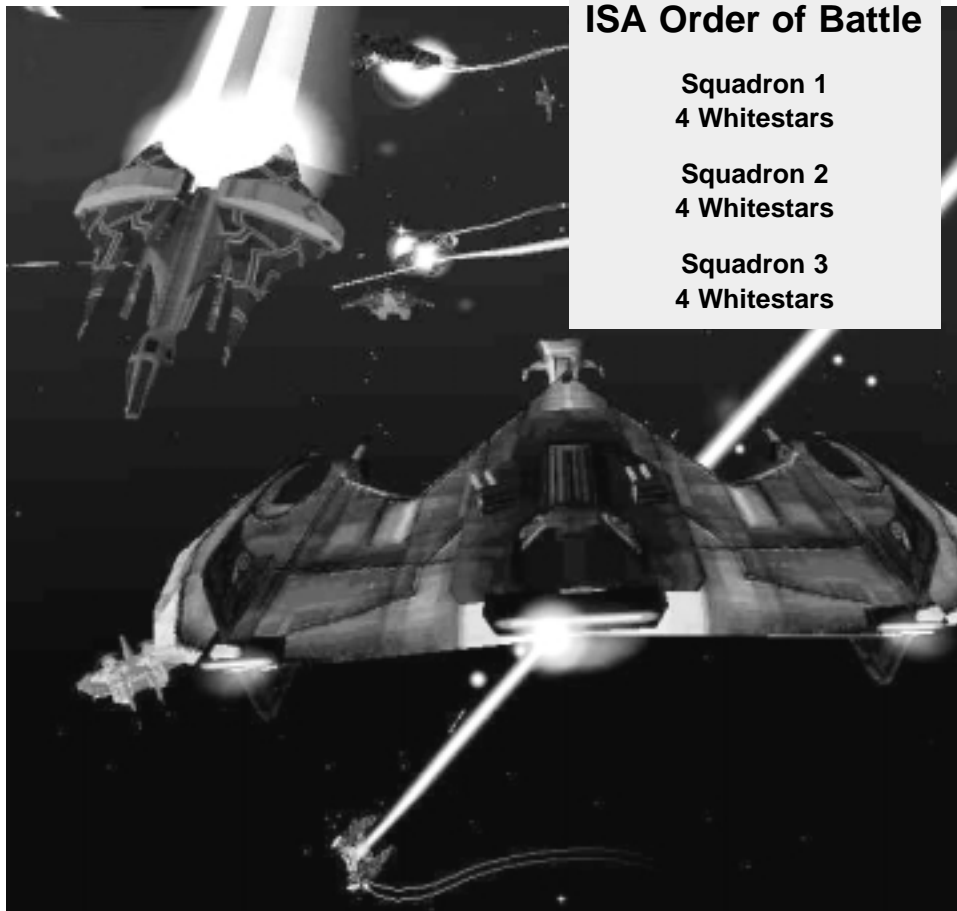
(d10)

- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| 1-5 | Obey the desires of the Fleet Commander   |
| 6-9 | Move toward the Centauri, ignoring the Whitestars, firing at any Centauri who are in range.     |
| 10  | Move toward the Centauri, firing at every ship in the way, damn the ISA for their interference. |

You continue this for the first 3 pulses of Turn 1, given the distances at the start there is little likelihood of much blood being spilt. Keep in mind all of the special rules governing the Dargans with regards to movement, weapons fire, etc, etc. By the end of Turn 1 the Narn should have realised that these are not actually Whitestars at all but are in fact a dirty Centauri trick! As soon as the game is tumbled, the ISA player hands the sheets for the Dargans back over to the Centauri player.

#### Turn 2

A series of Jumpgates open and a further 3 squadrons of Whitestars appear. These are real ISA Whitestars, but the Narn commander doesn't know this. The Centauri commander does but what he does is up to him. These ISA really do



## ISA Order of Battle

**Squadron 1**  
4 Whitestars

**Squadron 2**  
4 Whitestars

**Squadron 3**  
4 Whitestars



## NARN ORDER OF BATTLE

### *Cmd Squadron*

Admiral T'Rash has Warleader  
1 Bin'Tak, Eye of G'Kar  
2 x G'Quans  
1 x Sho'Kar  
1 x Thentus

### *Support Squadron*

2 x Dag'Kar

### *Squadron 3*

3 x T'Loth

### *Squadron 4*

3 x G'Lan Mag Cruisers

### *Squadron 5*

4 x Thentus

### *Squadron 6*

3 x G'Karith

### *Squadron 7*

3 x G'Quans

### *Squadron 8*

3 x Sho'Kos

### *Fighters*

29 flights x Fighters, any combination

want to keep the peace and prevent a battle. When they arrive, read the following to them in private, "You come out of hyperspace and quickly realise that you are too late. The battle is already being joined. Worse than that, there is a Shadow Regeneration base lying dormant in this system. Neither force can be allowed to take it, only the ISA has the technology to learn from it safely. They must be prevented from capturing it. You quickly give the order, send for reinforcements and head for the base."

From this point onwards the battle is played out as a regular battle, with 3 sides. The ISA reinforcements will not arrive until after the special conditions are met.

#### Special Conditions;

Sooner or later, either the Narn or the Centauri are going to get a troop carrier into contact with the base. The base is, to all intents and purposes, dead. It is, however, fully operational and all it requires are living entities (Marines? Anyone?) to give it life. It has spent the last several years on automatic, repairing all of the damage it sustained. A dozen Whitestars are not going to be able to stop all of the Narn and Centauri from eventually making contact with the base. 1 Pulse after the first boarding party docks, the base comes to life. The Station is very confused and very angry, it is practically a living beast. It remembers the Whitestars, all too well. It will fire with the following priority:

Closest vessels first, in a tie it goes for a Whitestar!

Two Pulses after the first Centauri marines dock

it will begin launching fighters, only the Centauri are suitable for piloting these vessels. Each point of troops will allow it to launch 1 flight, up to its maximum. These have the same firing priorities as the weapons systems.

One full turn after the activation of the Station, ISA reinforcements arrive in the shape of the Excalibur and her 2 Neshatan escort vessels. This is where it gets really interesting.

At this point both the Narn and Centauri should feel that they can still capture the base and the Alliance forces will make the decision to destroy it completely, an intention that they will tell everybody within broadcasting range.

Both the Narn and the Centauri cannot allow this to happen.

This is where the fur flies and the fun really begins as each race has the following priority

#### Objectives

**Centauri:** Capture the base, once you have it you can use its firepower to overwhelm the Narn and the ISA.

**Narn:** kill the fanheads, all Centauri must die, horribly, painfully and soon! Oh, the station looks pretty dangerous too!

**ISA:** Destroy the station, it cannot be allowed to survive, try and stop the battle if you can but if not, withdraw as soon as the station is gone. Shadow Regeneration Station; KILL, KILL, KILL, KILL

\* \* \*

(Editor's note: Boarding rules for FA should be available soon at [www.robertshome.org](http://www.robertshome.org). For the moment, the GM should make something up.)

# SHADOW

## of his former self



Silence.

As ordered, I rest.

It is not so much an order as an imperative implanted in my mind.

The scream of the demons is irresistible. It takes hold of your most basic self, the most ancient parts of your mind, and makes obedience compulsive.

Even the masters know their slaves need rest.

But it is no reward for a job well done. It is a task to be carried out - just like any other.

I feel this body I inhabit relax. The tendrils feel more flexible. Less tense. I sense the energy of a nearby star coursing through my mottled black skin.

Nourishment.

As in all relaxation, the mind has little to engage it.

Even as a warship's processor...

It is at times like these that I become aware.

Metacognition returns. The knowledge of self.

And I wish I was dead.

Oh, the Shadows may try to suppress all higher mental functions when they implant their nanotechnology into the skulls of their pilots. They do not want self awareness. Rational thought.

It is too slow.

What they seek, and what they need, are impulse responses. Motor-neural skills. Reflexes.

And they take what they want.

But when I am ordered to rest, that entity I know as myself awakens for a short time.

Oh, that I were dead...

I remember the actions of my warship self as though waking from dream.

Disjointed snippets flash to mind ... of starfields, planets, navigation instructions, hyperspace currents. I remember manoeuvring in formation with other cruisers - as effortless as a familiar dance. As exhilarating as a first-date.

I remember the anticipation of sensing a target. The bloodlust pulsing through my veins.

Only I don't have veins...

Worst of all, I remember how I enjoyed killing my prey...

How could I allow this to happen?

I was brought up to believe that the key to being human was to control your animal instincts. To

act detached, and behave in a rational and considered fashion.

I see the prey before me...

It is helpless. Insignificant.

Why did I feel contempt as it feebly tried to defend itself?

I know that type of ship. I saw one as a child when the Narn ambassador visited my world...

I remember that child thinking it looked sharp, beautiful... dangerous.

But the animal-me took delight in slowly cutting its heart out, leaving its crew to die.

Despite the futility, the enemy lashed out in return. Little fighters swarmed to help protect their home.

I rejoiced as my companions effortlessly swatted them aside. Later, I swelled with pride at the acknowledgment by my masters of a job well completed.

Exhilaration. Bloodlust. Contempt. Delight. Pride.

Not to mention rage and revenge.

These are the emotional reins by which my masters steer me.

And when I am left to rest, these reins are dropped...

And self-consciousness returns.

Self disgust and loathing.

These threaten to overwhelm me when I am awake.

I wish I could not remember.

I wish I simply was not.

How did this happen to me?

How did I allow this to happen?

Again, I am ashamed.

For it was many of those same basic emotions that got me into this mess in the first place.

I survived the Earth-Minbari war. Just. A standard military conscript screening test revealed me to be a latent P5. I was sent to Psi-Corp - and they awoke my talents with drugs. I became a spy.

Like many Earthers, after the Battle of the Line I vowed Ònever againÓ.

I joined a covert team of specialists sent to obtain advanced alien technologies for Earth. Oh, sure we had signed all the international protocols. But this was different. Our home had been threatened.

Besides, the aliens did not deserve the same respect we accord our own people. Surely, they must have realised that when it came to defending Earth - they were either with us, or against us.

During the Earth-Minbari war, none of them had taken our side. Now I know why.

Ah. My arrogance. Such an easy trap to fall into.

I've had plenty of time to reflect on this. Every time I rest.

I still remember the day I received the extraordinary news.

I was sitting at home after a long tour offworld. I was sitting with my mother's cat on her 50th floor balcony. It had sea views.

The Psi-cop that had arrived at the door had been pretty. About half a head shorter than I, she had had a severe look - short dark hair, high cheekbones and an overly red lipstick.

She had ordered me to get my gear and report to Mars! Hardly the place for an alien technology thief.

Within a matter of hours I was bundled onto a shuttle, carried into orbit and transferred into a Psi-cop transport. In to hyperspace, out of hyperspace. And there was Mars.

I was told nothing. All my questions were rebuffed, or met with silence.

I was taken to an excavation site. On Sirius Planum, Mars.

What I saw took my breath away.

A huge black spider of a ship half buried in Mars' dusty red soil. Light seemed to fall into the hull. Not reflect off it. And I had an odd sensation - as if it were calling to me.

The sense of power was immense. Only later did I realise this was an enticement.

We learnt nothing in the hours before dawn. The ship was impervious to all our probes. Then the Psi-cop told me the ship needed a teep as its pilot.

I was not surprised. I guess the ship had already told me - in its subconscious way.

The Psi-cop asked me to volunteer. She said they did not have much time...

She knew. Of that I am certain. As I stepped into the ship my telepathic powers were magnified. I sensed that she had encountered this tech-

nology before.

There was a smugness... a sense of achievement at how she had suggested to me that I would be willing to make such a supreme sacrifice.

Sacrifice?

She was excited at the power this craft represented. The invulnerability it promised... I sensed that she sought to control it for the Corps. Not Earth?

That surprised me.

It was not a violent takeover. It was more like being enveloped in a warm bath. Like feeling the warm glow of alcohol coursing through your veins.

With it came a sense of power. Of confidence. Of immortality.

It was like slowly waking, only to find you're not awake - and that you don't have full control of your limbs...

I heard myself scream. Not in pain. And not to my human companions.

I screamed in frustration. I was stuck. But I wasn't stuck. I needed help to get free. But I should have been able to climb out myself...

But I was not awake.

I remember being elated as another spider ship appeared in the Martian sky.

I should have been afraid.

The Psi-cop entered my mind, urging me to flee. Io, she said. She tried to force the order into my head.

I felt paralysed...

But then the beam from my spidery companion swept over her...

I laughed!

But it was not me that laughed... it was something inside me.

I remember the sense of freedom and elation as I thrust upward out of the Martian atmosphere.

I should have been afraid - and amazed.

I remember two other spider cruisers approaching me - taking hold of me above and below.

Since then, I do not remember.

Not well, anyway. Just flashes. Blurs.

I know I am no longer me.

I know I am nothing more than an organic central processor for a warship.

I know my masters - though they are merely shadows in my mind - have absolute control.

I know that I once thought victory was a goal worthy of any price. Oh, how my masters love such a thought.

I know that I once thought nobody and nothing should stand between me and Earth's security. My masters rejoice at such motivation.

But now, in these times between dreams, I know that Earth is one step closer to oblivion because of those like me.

And now I am going to be among those who deliver it.

Forgive me...

A surge of emotion.

What is it? Where is it from?

I am angry...

I sense we have been challenged...

I must punish the arrogance of those who feel they can resist our might!

My thoughts slow...

Once again, I dream angry dreams...

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# How to violently violate the Vorlons

AS A rabid fanhead the thought of having a Vorlon Planet-Killer in system and blotting out my sunshine is a disturbing thought. It brings the question to mind of, what the heck does a fanhead do to rid your system of the pesky Vorlon infestations?

Let's see now, they have bigger and badder guns, tough special armor, EW which makes yours look silly, and ships which can take lots and lots of damage. A tough nut to crack. When I posted that I was going to write this article I got a response that the tactic was to RUN!!!!. That person was absolutely correct, but run at them, not away.

The secret to killing Vorlon ships is to swarm them with your heavy hitters, you must close at best possible speed to reduce the time he has to pick you off at long range and blast away at point blank range. If you are fighting an even pointed scenario you will most likely have him heavily outnumbered, this works to your advantage.

When the battle starts don't even think about using OEW, he has too much DEW for you to overcome, turtle and use any scouts to add blanket DEW so you have a better chance to survive to point blank range. Come at him fast and hard so he has fewer chances to destroy ships. When you finally get to point blank range where you have decent numbers to hit then use OEW to negate his DEW.

Now the real secret is to use a mostly HCV/MCV/LCV fleet. Why you ask? Because the multiple ships will overwhelm his ability to kill enough of you before you close. Even a Vorlon has limited firepower, but with that firepower he will kill or cripple a Capitol ship just as easily as he does a smaller vessel. The more targets you bring the more will get through his defenses. Bringing Cap ships just put your eggs into top few baskets, he's going to kill ships, let him shoot at rabbits not bears, the smaller profiles of the small ships makes you harder to hit and more maneuverable.



*Tactical Display*

By REID HUPACH

When you get there concentrate your fire on one target at a time, unless you have an overkill situation it is better to kill one Vorlon than cripple two, he can't heal up damage if he's dead. Now as to what types of ships to take, use ships that are Matter Cannon and Heavy Array armed. Take Demos and Kutais for your heavy hitters; use Havens, Mograttis and Lupas to give him too many targets to shoot at. These small ships may die easily but to kill a lot of them he has to have really lucky dice. Once they close these ships can stay in close and hurt him every turn, basically overloading his ability to kill all of them. If he ignores them to shoot your bigger ships they will peck him to death. If he goes after the little guys your bigger ships will hit home better.

Now of course you must realize that you will have to give out several medals posthumously to the Heros of the Empire after this battle. The Vorlons will do lots of damage, but they can be destroyed. So to recap what to do.

1. Close as fast as you can.
2. Take lots and lots of hulls.
3. Concentrate your firepower on one ship at a time.
4. Bring ships with lots of heavy close-in firepower.
5. Keep on him once you are there, short range is your only hope.

Well, that's my little secrets to killing those pesky Vorlons with the Centauri. Try it, you may like it. Nothing is more satisfying than killing a bunch of guys who always answer a question with another question, I mean who do they think they are???

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#### FICTION:

"Captain to the bridge", the intercom blared. ...again... thought Captain Blake, ...I've gotta get that thing turned off. Slowly crawling out of the bunk in his cabin the short Captain of the EAS Warlock pulled on his service uniform trying to shake off the cobwebs of too-little sleep. Arriving on the bridge the Captain immediately made for his seat, hoping to try and do his thinking without having to concentrate too hard on standing upright. It had been only 14 hours since the near-disastrous battle against the Vigilance at Gamma 7, and the captain had spent 13 of those hours supervising the hurried repairs all over the ship using the meager amounts of captured Brakiri supplies. Jury rigging Brakiri parts to work with their own small supply of spares was a tough task, figuring out what the parts were in the first place was worse. Ignoring the odd chuckle over his haggard appearance, Blake made a mental note to try and at least wash or clean up his hair next time he was awoken with a summons to the bridge. The Captain turned to his second in command after sitting down, stifling a yawn... "Juan, what's up, don't tell me we're in trouble again I gotta have a couple hours sleep at least before the next disaster." Smiling at his Captain's attempts to lighten the situation, Commander Juan reported. "I'm afraid I don't know sir. About half-an-hour ago sensors thought they had three small ships for a few seconds before they disappeared. About fifteen minutes ago we started getting some bizarre readings well aft of us, like some kind of shadow in hyperspace. We've tried scanning with the targeting systems but there's nothing there to lock onto." Blake had a bad feeling about this, but thought it might be lack of sleep affecting him, "Don't suppose it's just some

sensor glitch, you know we didn't get to run any hyperspace sensor trials before we packed up." "I thought about that sir, except...well...the shadows seem to be getting closer."

...oh damn...

"Juan...the pilots have been back to regular sleep cycles since the fight right? Get them up and to their fighters just in case, don't sound the alarm though, no need to start a panic." Climbing out of his seat, Blake walked over to the sensor station, suddenly a little more alert, "Johnson, let me see what you've got..." Chief Johnson, the senior sensor operator on the Warlock, touched a few screens in rapid succession and brought up several displays of sensor contact information. "See Captain, just not enough there to really track, I'd say it's a glitch except they appear to be closing. Any other ship would have probably lost 'em, but the our new sensors and computer systems are way above even the Omega's, definitely something odd." "Give me a visual on the area," Blake ordered. Immediately the large display screen over the sensor station switched to an outside view, filling with a swirling mess of orange and black vortices and discharges, the usual clutter of hyperspace. "I don't see anything out there...could it be some kind of natur..." Blake never finished his thought as a trio of dark wedges seemed to fade out of nothingness, speeding up and angling directly at the Warlock.

...this CAN'T be good...

Instantly the Captain was wide awake riding a fresh surge of adrenaline, "Sound action stations, bring up the interceptors. Helm, bring us about relative port 120, get our broadside to them. Commander! Get those damn fighters out there." Once again the Warlock came alive turning on her unknown pursuers.



#### *Flight of the Warlock*

Part II, By ALEX KETTLE

#### SCENARIO:

WHILE fleeing through hyperspace away from the Brakiri Gamma 7 system, the Warlock crew eventually finished their repairs and started to relax, preparing for their next jump into normal space. Unfortunately, they had the misfortune to pass by a trio of Torvalus Falchions, one of the last remaining groups of the Torvalus still lurking around. Hoping to avoid contact the Torvalus simply activated their shading fields intending to just slip away, but something went wrong. Somehow this human ship, their newest, was still detecting them...a feat well beyond their capabilities. The three ships turned towards the Warlock to investigate and quickly realized that this Human ship was carrying Shadow technology boosting its computer systems. The Shadows had cheated...even in defeat as they left for the rim their manipulations continued, they still tried to cheat at the game. Angered at this latest evidence of cheating they moved in to attack.

#### Forces:

**Torvalus:** 3 Falchion MCVs

**Clarke:** EAS Warlock, with whatever damage suffered from the first battle minus repairs, plus whatever fighters survived the first battle.

#### Setup:

Setup the mapsheets with the short sides together to form a longer map, this represents the area



the Warlock can maneuver in, it they move off the map they may lose the beacon and become lost in hyperspace. The entire map is considered to be in hyperspace, and the map may only float towards either short end, leaving either long edge ends the battle.

**Torvalus:** Enter from one edge of the map at speed 15.

**Clarke:** Warlock starts in the exact middle of the map facing away from the Torvalus at speed 5. The Warlock may not launch any fighters until the third turn, as her pilots were not yet at action stations.

#### Victory conditions:

**Torvalus:** The Torvalus are sick of the Shadow attempts to cheat and manipulate the outcome of the Great Game, they had spent millennia betting on the outcome of their little wars and now even with all of the other First Ones leaving the balance would be altered by their technology. This cannot happen, too many bets on the future would be lost to such interfering, but it isn't worth the loss of even a small ship. Such an advanced ship might be dangerous even to them, if seriously pushed they can always just slip away...there's lots of time to fix such minor problems.

Victory - destroy the Warlock or cause sufficient damage to force it to drift off one long side of the map uncontrolled - this would leave the Warlock lost in hyperspace and effectively destroyed. Minor Victory - cause heavy damage (destroy at least two structure blocks) and withdraw with all ships. Loss - lose one or more of your ships without destroying the Warlock.

**Warlock:** You have no idea what you're facing, but they must be dangerous with such incredible stealth technology. Still, they're small and there are only three of them, you should be able to take them, finish them off and hope that you've still got enough captured supplies to repair any damage you take.

Victory - Destroy at least one Torvalus vessel and drive off the others without losing a full structure section. Minor Victory - drive off the attackers, but lose a structure section. Loss - lose two or more complete sections.

#### Historical:

The Torvalus drove in on the Warlock firing their powerful Volley lasers, but proving just too hard to hit for the Warlock to strike back. After several passes the Warlock was starting to suffer heavy damage to it's port side when a Railgun scored a heavy hit on one of the Falchions. Just as the Falchion was hit, the Warlock's fighters were finally able to launch. Sensing that this big ship while built and crewed by such a young race was still a major threat and far too much for them to handle on their own, the three Torvalus turned and slipped away into the depths of hyperspace, leaving the Warlock to resume her course and lick her wounds yet again.

To be continued...

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## B5W SCENARIO:

# The Sheridan solution

By **MICHAEL MORPHEUS.**  
with assistance from Rob Green  
and Alex Roberts

AT THE height of the Earth-Minbari war, Earth saw its major victory against the Black Star. Earth scientists then attempted to develop a weapon, a mine, that could detect oncoming Minbari ships, and automatically blow up, a proximity destruction device. Now, these mines were very big, and painted to be confused with most normal-sized asteroids. However, with the Minbari Jammers still creating a difficult-to-detect profile, the fuse was set for proximity detonation. In order to help prevent Earth casualties during setting, several modified Hermes Transports, with external access to their cargo bay for quick launching of explosive equipment, went out to set the mines, using the ship's shuttles to set the charges and quickly get out of range. Because of initial problems with a remote setting mine, and how Jammers affected the remote sensors, a pin set mine was used, and initially, the shuttlecraft would set the mines using the modified transports to lay out the items, set the mines and run. However, it was discovered on first workings that the shuttle could not get away fast enough. So, they developed a quicker setting mine, and used the Nova Starfuries normally aboard the Hermes to literally pull a pin, similar to 20th century grenades. This left a large hole in the "asteroid", but, unless the asteroid was scanned, no one noticed it. Captains of the transports wrote down the locations, but other than high-ranking Earth officials, no one knew where they were. Although captains were told to avoid asteroid fields, so that the Minbari could not trap them there, the mines were the real reason. They did not want more ships being lost, especially to "stupid mistakes", as the Earth ships (with less EW to spare) were more likely than the Minbari to set off the mines. The asteroids would provide a decent wall to hopefully stop the oncoming Minbari, and if they were fairly lucky, provide another victory or two. There is no recorded battle during the Earth-Minbari war with these mines, but Earth does record placing several minefields in classified locations. The Minbari record going through a heavily defended asteroid field a few days before the Battle of the Line. Additional records are few and unconfirmed, as Earth doesn't want to admit they exist. After the war, the minefields were left alone.

#### Scenario:

This should be done with an even number of players. One player (the defender, Earth) sets up the asteroid field, any size he wants, provided that one hex in 8 has an asteroid. Personal recommendation is that the field is 50 hexes long, or longer. Now, most of the asteroids are duds, but that's the fun of it. Mark down the location of 1/3 of the asteroids on a separate piece of paper, and set it aside. These asteroids are the ones that will have the charges and detection system.

The rules are standard rules, one player on one end of the field, and the aggressor (Minbari) on the other end. There should be at least 20 hexes between the ships and the field. Each explosive-charged asteroid is detectable only by an EW lock of at least 2 points.

When a ship comes within a designated range of the asteroid, it explodes, dealing damage in a 3-hex radius. Explosions occur after all movement, but before the fire phase.

The damage is Flash.

#### Designated Detection Range

Enormous Units: 3 hexes

Capship/HCV: 2 hexes

MCV: 2 hexes

LCV/Super Heavy Fighters: 1 hexes

Other Fighters: 0 hex

#### Damage from the mines:

0 hex: 90 pts

1 hex: 60 pts

2 hex: 30 pts

3 hex: 10 pts

#### Points available

**Earth:** 4000 points

Not Including the following (One separate player)

2 Hermes Transports

6 Nova Starfuries each

**Minbari:** 11000 points

Must have at least 2 Sharlins or their respective variants.

Otherwise, treat this as you would any other E-M battle (with the Minbari probably romping through all comers). Now, historically, the Minbari player goes through the field, gets a few sides blown off, and still destroys most everything facing them.

To have a little fun with the battle, you can pick any race against Earth. Or, have a 3rd player in charge of the minefield, and have both players charge in. Now, that's a combination of chaos and fun.

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See the nuclear weapons rules on page

# When you draw down the wrath of the gods...



*GROPOS*

By ALEX ROBERTS

**T**HE Kirishiac are one of the youngest of the Ancient races, as well as one of the few Ancients not to have achieved transcendence to a state of light. Rising to power outside of the influence of the other Ancients, the Kirishiac once ruled over an empire stretching across thousands of light years.

Though most of their opponents were brought to heel through the use of overwhelming orbital supremacy delivered through their powerful Lordship and Conqueror vessels, some races were so intransigent that bombardment was not enough to cause surrender. Other times, the Kirishiac wanted to take something from an enemy planet. Of course, in their arrogance, some Kirishiac lords simply enjoyed killing and terrorizing races first hand, rather than from the comfort of a vessel.

The instruments of all of this destruction were their powerful strike teams. Led by and composed largely of 7 meter tall Kirishiacs outfitted with armored suits, and supported by their orbital swarms, Kirishiac strike forces were troops to be feared across the galaxy.

## Technology

**Armored Suits:** All Kirishiac warriors are outfitted with large armored suits. Designed to help them survive on worlds with lower pressure and gravity than their homeworld, they are so tough and well outfitted as to make them powerful instruments of war. Antigravity packs give them incredible maneuverability. Some suits used by assault and command teams also have built in combat gauntlets that enhance their effectiveness against enemy infantry in close combat. These gauntlets have electric shock mechanisms as well as very short ranged anti-personnel weaponry built in.

**Gravitic Augmenter:** Focusing their energy together, some orbital swarms are able to affect enemy units, in a manner similar to ship based Gravitic Augmenters and shifters. This weapon is fired as a normal weapon. If it hits, you may move the enemy unit d6 inches in any direction you choose. In addition, the unit takes damage as normal, as it is slammed against the ground in an attempt to destroy it. If the aug-menter chooses not to fire at an enemy unit, it

can instead increase the range of any single matter accelerator equipped unit within 2 inches to 6/12/18 instead of its normal range of 3/6/9.

**Gravitic Shielding System:** Although some armored suits such as command suits have gravitic shielding built in (and already represented in their stats), some orbitals are equipped with more powerful gravitic shields, which can be used to protect nearby Kirishiac units. At the end of its movement, each Orbital swarm equipped with a Gravitic Shielding System may declare that they are protecting one single Kirishiac unit (whether this is an armored warrior or orbital swarm is not important, but it cannot protect another Gravitic shield equipped swarm).

Until its next movement phase, so long as the shielding swarm remains within 2 inches, the protected unit gains 1 to its profile per shielding swarm protecting it. In addition, the shielding swarm may, before damage is rolled, take any hit upon that protected unit, instead. Each shielding swarm may take no more than 1 hit per turn. Due to the nature of the shielding, the weapon being shifted to hit the shielding swarm may choose to use its stat for DVA or DVD, whichever is greater, against the swarm's discipline (this is to prevent DVA damage only weapons from being absorbed without consequence by the shielding swarm).

No more than 2 swarms may declared as protecting any single Kirishiac unit at any one time.

**Heavy Antigravity Accelerator:** Some large orbital swarms are designed to be used as artillery support for Kirishiac forces, terrorizing and suppressing enemy strong points. These swarms use larger orbitals, generally 1 meter or so in radius. These orbitals are injected with a core of antigravity energy, and then accelerated out of the swarm at high speeds, similar to an artillery round. When they strike their target, the orbital breaks open, spilling out its explosive energy and devastating the surrounding area. Regeneration systems in these swarms allow for

the recreation of more orbitals to provide a steady supply of ammunition.

**Matter Accelerator:** This is not a weapon system per se, but rather an ability of certain close assault orbital swarms. Taking one of their small orbitals, and accelerating it to a very rapid speed, the swarm shoots it out to strike the enemies of the Kirishiac. Regeneration systems in the orbitals allow the swarm to absorb nearby material and form these into new orbitals, replenishing their supply of orbitals that can be turned into weapons. This combined with a high rate of fire, makes these assault swarms very effective against enemy infantry, though the small size of the orbitals limits their effective strength against enemy armored units.

**Orbital Swarms:** Miniaturizing their ship based orbital technology, and adapting it to ground based support was a relatively easy task for the Kirishiac. These swarms were composed of small orbitals, ranging from 3-6 inches in radius each for anti-personnel swarms, to up to 1-2 meters each for larger artillery support units. These orbitals swarmed around a central core. This core was essentially the central processing unit for the swarm, powered by energy provided from its swarm of orbitals, while directing them to attack enemies at the request of the Kirishiac lords. Various types of swarms have different types of orbitals, as well as differing levels of programmed artificial intelligence.

**Portable Antigravity Beams:** The mainstay of the Kirishiac ground forces' firepower was supplied by their antigravity beams. An outgrowth of their ship based weaponry, these antigravity beams came in a number of sizes and strengths. Devastating against armored and infantry forces, these weapons were the core of Kirishiac firepower. They come in Light, Standard, and Heavy versions, used by different Kirishiac armored troopers. There is also a shoulder mounted light scatter antigravity beam, which is used by higher-ranking Kirishiac and is extremely effective against enemy infantry due to its high rate of fire.

## Units

**Anti-Personnel Orbital Swarm:** These orbital swarms are equipped with Light Antigravity

Beams, created by focusing the energy of the orbitals at the center of the swarm, which is then directed against enemy units.

**Armored Kirishiac Warrior:** These units are the typical Kirishiac ground warriors. 7 meters tall, and suited in powerful armor, they are more than a match for most enemy ground forces. They are equipped with Standard Antigravity Beams.

**Assault Kirishiac Warriors:** Reveling in bloodshed, some Kirishiac request to be outfitted with combat gauntlets, allowing them to slaughter enemy infantry and civilians with ease, and washing their suits with rivers of blood. These suits are equipped with Combat Gauntlets (represented by their high CC factor), and shoulder mounted Light Antigravity Beams.

**Assault Orbital Swarms:** These orbital swarms are equipped with a Matter Accelerator (which uses the orbitals themselves). They are also a terror in close combat, as their orbitals swarm and strike enemy infantry, pulverizing them in short order.

**Augmenter Swarm:** This orbital swarm is equipped with a Gravitic Augmenter.

**Command Kirishiac Warriors:** Those Kirishiac who rise to command positions are granted more advanced versions of the standard Kirishiac armored suits, with better sensors and armor, as well as built in shielding (represented by their higher stats). Surrounded by trusted compatriots in similarly advanced suits, these command units are to be feared above all other Kirishiac suits. They are armed with Standard Antigravity Beams as well as Combat Gauntlets, and shoulder mounted Light Scatter Antigravity Beams. These units are special in that they may fire both their Standard Antigravity Beams as well as their Light Scatter Antigravity Beams in the same turn.

**Special:** Forward Observer, May Call for Orbital Bombardment, Company Command Unit.

**Gravitic Shielding Swarm:** This orbital swarm is equipped with a Gravitic Shielding System for protecting nearby units.

**Heavy Support Kirishiac Warrior:** These are armored Kirishiac equipped with stronger weaponry for use against enemy strongpoints and extremely powerful units. They are equipped with Heavy Antigravity Beams.

**Heavy Weapons Orbital Swarm:** These orbital swarms are larger than normal, and are able to direct their energy into the equivalent of a Heavy Antigravity Beam.

**Matter Support Orbital Swarm:** Equipped with a Heavy Antigravity Accelerator system, these swarms are composed of relatively large orbitals, which are used by the swarm to provide artillery support to Kirishiac forces.

**Orbital Strike:** Lordship and Conqueror vessels often support Kirishiac ground forces.

**Recon Orbital Swarm:** Some orbital swarms are programmed with significantly higher artificial intelligence levels than normal swarms. These swarms are designed to scout out for enemy units that the Kirishiac's orbital sensors have been unable to locate, and then direct

Kirishiac forces and firepower to that unit's location. They are also equipped with the ability to fire a Light Scatter AG Beam for defensive purposes.

**Special:** Self Ordering, Forward Observer, May Call for Orbital Bombardment

\*See attached spreadsheets for weapons details, equipment loads, and the Kirishiac Orbital Bombardment Table.

#### TO&E

##### Kirishiac Strike Force:

HQ: 1 platoon  
Standard Platoons: 1-5 platoons  
Support Units: 0-3 platoons

##### HQ:

1-5 Command Kirishiac Armored Suits  
Cost: --/180/270/400 each  
0-3 Gravitic Shielding Swarms  
Cost: 20/40/60/90 each  
0-2 Recon Orbital Swarms  
Cost: 22/44/66/100

##### Standard Units:

**Line Platoon:** (Max 5 Warriors total)  
1-5 Armored Kirishiac Warriors  
Cost: 70/140/210/300 each  
0-2 Heavy Support Kirishiac Warriors  
Cost: 80/160/240/350 each

##### Assault Platoon:

(Max 5 Warriors total)  
1-5 Assault Kirishiac Warriors  
Cost: 65/130/185/290 each  
0-3 Assault Orbital Swarms  
Cost: 14/28/42/63

##### Cleansing Units:

(Max 5 Orbital Swarms)  
1-5 Anti-Personnel Orbital Swarms  
Cost: 20/40/60/90 each  
0-3 Heavy Weapons Orbital Swarms  
Cost: 25/50/75/112 each

#### Support Units:

##### Augmenter Platoon:

1-3 Augmenter Swarms  
Cost: 14/28/42/63

##### Artillery Platoon:

1-3 Matter Support Orbital Swarms  
Cost: 45/90/135/200 each

##### Recon Platoon:

1-3 Recon Orbital Swarms  
Cost: 22/44/66/100 each

##### Shielding Platoon:

1-3 Gravitic Shielding Swarms  
Cost: 20/40/60/90 each

##### Orbital Support:

(Max 3)  
0-1 Lordship  
Cost: 440 each  
1-3 Conqueror  
Cost: 325 each

\* \* \*

(Data cards for Kirishiac units are included in the Attachments folder)

## Torvalus Falchion Transport

By MATT PLONSKI

Base Hull (Unlimited deployment)

The Falchion is the Torvalus personal transport ship, serving a role equivalent to the Minbari Flyer. It is designed to be all but invisible, and succeeds rather well at that task. Best reserved for situations where conflict is undesirable, the Falchion is ideal for espionage or other clandestine operations.

The Torvalus designed the Falchion for dealing with the younger races, when it was preferable to downplay their technological superiorities. They found trade negotiations progressed faster when one of the parties is not intimidated by the presence of a warship millions of years more advanced than their own. This is not to say that there wasn't a fleet of Dark Knives observing the transactions from a short distance away, watching out for their own best interests.

An interesting note on the classification of the Falchion and other extremely small First One vessels as medium ships instead of LCVs; their physical size may be representative of what a young race would call a Light Combat Vessel, the capability of even the most diminutive Ancient ships require use of the rules for medium ships. Advanced Sensors and other complex systems (most are jump capable) are beyond the scope of the limited subset of ship rules that apply to LCVs.

\* \* \*

*The B5W and Fleet Action SCSs for this vessel can be found in the attachments folder*

# Meddle not in the affairs of wizards

By ALEX ROBERTS

Note: This contains spoilers for the series "The Passing of the Technomages, as well as the series "Legions of Fire." If you have not read these books you may not want to read this.

Over the last 1000 years, tales of the Technomages have filtered throughout spacefaring societies. The Technomages are powerful and mysterious, wielding powers that, lacking any scientific definition, are nothing short of magical. Though their abilities are granted through technology, the effects hint of the works of such mythological beings as Merlin or Morgana. To those who do not understand the Technomages, they are nothing short of miracle workers, mages, or witches.

## History:

"What do you want?" These simple words formed the beginning of what are now known as the Technomages. Around 1000 AD, several hundred years before the last great war, a race known as the Taratimude were approached by the Shadows and asked this very question. Some of the Taratimude hoped to improve the lives and well being of their citizens and society. Others sought power and personal gain. Nearly all fell in to the seductive promises of the Shadows, and accepted their "gifts". Implanted with Shadow technology, many of the Taratimude were transformed into agents of chaos.

This technology was miraculous. Drawing upon the energy surrounding the implanted individual, it enabled one to wield great power. Invisibility, vast sensory powers, incredible movement and flight, fireballs, shields, armored skin, and destructive spheres were only a few of their powers. With enough training and practice, one could wield the powers of their implants in fantastic creative ways. Minute nanotech devices and probes could be produced, infused with the power of their "magic". Weapons and vessels could even be designed to contain a portion of the Taratimude's implants, imparting into them a portion of the Taratimude's power.

The Shadows hoped to use the Taratimude's new abilities to sow chaos and discord across the universe. They would be agents provocateur, and some could even lead armies of the Shadow's ground troops to war against the servants of order. During the war, many of the Taratimude served the Shadows in their task of destruction. However, this was not to last for long. In addition to offering vast powers to the



user, the implants enhanced the user's feelings of aggression and agitation, to help them cause chaos. During the great war against order, chaos came to the Taratimude's planet. In their frenzy, the Taratimude fell upon each other, killing nearly their entire race, and leaving their homeworld a ruin.

Some of the Taratimude escaped this orgy of destruction. Along with Weiriden, the greatest among them, they sought to fight the Shadow's programming, and use their powers for good instead of chaos. Led by a circle of 5, and following a code of 7 principles, they called themselves Technomages, and tried to master the chaos and destructive impulses that the Shadow technology urged them towards. By exposing the destructive impulses the tech instilled, they encouraged many of those Taratimude that remained to join them. They hid from the Shadows during the last great war, refusing to serve their erstwhile masters.

To increase their numbers, beings of other races were accepted into the Technomages and were implanted with the Shadow tech. Despite their best efforts, none of the mages was able to reproduce the fantastic Shadow technology. Every few years, one of the Circle would make a pilgrimage to the Shadows, to accept a new batch of chrysalis, the base form of the implants that would grow within the body of the prospective mage. Although the Shadows disliked the new code and organization of the Technomages, they still hoped that their programming would overcome their code and principles, and that they could be subverted to join the Shadows in the coming war. Although defeated in the great war 1000 years ago (circa 1200AD), the Shadows knew that this was just a temporary setback, and planned as always for the next great

clash between chaos and order.

Some of the Technomages did succumb to their programming, and left the order, following their own goals and whims. On the planet of Centauri prime, one mage named Frazur, along with two compatriots, give their blessing and assistance to the Centauri in their war against the Xon, ensuring their extermination and the dominance of the Centauri race over the planet.

The mages Kwa-Kiri and Neldonic carved out empires on distant planets, satiating their greed for power. Even within the order, some could not withstand the programming of the implants. The Shadows had a great device within their subverted homeworld of Za'Ha'Dum. Called the Eye, it enabled the Shadows to control and direct their war machines across the universe, in addition to providing the defense of their homeworld and monitoring their enemies. But like all Shadow technology, it required a sentient brain to provide the processing power. Although the Vorlons had perfected the art of growing beings into devices that sought only to serve, the Shadows required already formed minds, which they subverted to their purposes. The Eye was no exception. However, the Eye required a being of incredible strength and power for its processor. No ordinary mortal would do.

The Shadows recognized Weiriden as an exceedingly powerful mage, closer to the technology implanted within than others of the order. Several mages were convinced by the Shadow's seductive whispers and their own technology's impulses to betray Weiriden, and bring her to Za'Ha'Dum. Here she was implanted in the Eye, providing many hundreds of years of operation. She fought as best as she could, but even the best efforts of the most powerful of the mages were only sufficient to resist the Eye for mere minutes. Subsumed to the will of the machine, within the Eye Weiriden remained, carrying out acts of destruction, chaos, and cruelty throughout the universe, at the bidding of the Shadows.

Some of the mages managed to control their impulses, however, and do some good. The mage Osiyrin studied the Drahk in an attempt to understand these most prevalent of the Shadow's servants. Gali-Gali helped the Empress Nare defeat the menace of the Zrud, and remained at her side throughout her rule. The mage Maju sealed the Lau hyperspace rift at the expense of his own life. Some still succumbed to the evil of the Shadows, as did Julius Blocker, who left the order and in 2167 created a nanovirus that wiped out an entire planet in 3 days of violence and



fear. Most however, managed to follow the code and the dictates of the Circle. By 2258 the Technomages numbered 500 mages, spread throughout the universe. It was at this time that the next great war was brewing, and the mages would face subservience to the Shadows, or their own destruction.

In 2258 a great convocation was called on the planet Soom, home to Circle member Elric, as well as his apprentice mage Galen. Here Morden came, offering many mages promises and offers of power if they joined the Shadows in the coming war. Shortly after the convocation, one, Elizar, was sent via the machinations of his mentor and Circle member Kell to join the Shadows, in an attempt to infiltrate them and feed information back to the Circle. This attempt failed miserably, as Elizar was converted to the Shadows will, and Kell was killed in an attempt to confront Elizar about his decision.

By this point all knowledge of the Shadow's involvement in the making of the Technomages had long been forgotten by all but the Circle, and most mages thought their order one devoted to knowledge and good. None other than their 5 leaders suspected that they had been created as instruments of war for the use of the Shadows, or that frequent visits to the Shadows kept the ranks of the mages filled with new recruits.

Determined not to be sucked into the coming war, the mages voted to hide on an asteroid, outside of commonly traveled space, shielded by their powers and magic from all who would wish to destroy them, or use them for evil. Despite the efforts of the Shadows and their agents, the mages managed to escape civilized space, faking their destruction on a freighter near Babylon 5. This deception cost the lives of 26 of their order, necessary to fool the Shadows into thinking that all of the mages were present on the freighter. Ensnared on an asteroid, those that remained, over 400, soon fell to bickering and fighting costing the lives of a number of the order. Others, those oldest, died off over time. Bereft of their homes, and their places of power, these mages could not sustain their lives any longer. After 18 months barely 400 remained of the 500 strong order in 2258. More died in aborted escape attempts. Nearly 40 died in one revolt that cost the life of Elric. The promises of Morden were coming back to haunt the mages, still taunting some that the power and promises of the Shadows were preferable to hiding on some remote rock.

Galen, one of the most promising of the newest initiates to the Technomages, was sent to kill Morden, as well as Elizar, and another mage who had joined the Shadows, Razeel. Galen, in his studies, had learned many of the original spells the Shadows intended the Taratimude to have and use. These spells had been forgotten and quashed by the mages over the years as too destructive and powerful, until none knew of their existence. Galen, however, rediscovered such basic spells as the spell of destruction, which created a spherical alternate universe, which collapsed around its target, utterly destroying it. With his power he was sent to kill the one who was causing the mages to defect, even in his absence, as well as the two mages

who had left the order to serve the Shadows, and in their investigation had also learned the spell of destruction.

Journeying first to Babylon 5, and then to Za'Ha'Dum, Galen entered the home of the Shadows, and confronted Elizar, at the head of a new army of Shadow troops. The Shadows, however, had lured him here for their own purposes. Weiriden was ailing, and a replacement was needed for the Eye's central processor. Galen was to be that replacement. Hooked into the Eye, however, Galen discovered the means to transcend the Shadow's programming, something even Weiriden was unable to do. In doing so, the Eye became subservient to his wishes, instead of him to its. At the same time, John Sheridan was fighting for his life in the levels of Za'Ha'Dum above him. Directing the Eye to ignore the plummeting White Star, laden with nuclear explosives, Galen assisted in the destruction of Za'Ha'Dum. Leaving the Eye, he then hunted down and killed Elizar and Razeel. Joining with a Shadow Cruiser, Galen escaped from Za'Ha'Dum, and returned to the mage's hiding place. Soon after the final apocalyptic battle of Corianus 6 took place, and the Shadows and Vorlons departed for the rim, to join the other Ancients beyond the galaxy. The mages, however, were still afraid of being used by the Shadows, should they return, or perhaps their servants who remained. They voted to remain in hiding indefinitely.

Although the Technomages remain in hiding, some are allowed out to ensure the destruction of what other Shadow technology remains. 3 mages assist Vir in his fight against the Drahk who have taken control of Londo, now Emperor of Centauri Prime, and through him the whole of the Centauri people. Journeying with Vir, they also manage to destroy one of the last remaining Shadow Planet Killers, as well as a great Shadow construction base hidden from prying eyes. After the Drahk plague infects the people of Earth, Galen joins the Excalibur and her crew, assisting them in their search for a cure, all the while destroying remaining Shadow technology wherever it is found, including an Earthforce secret R&D installation working on creating hybrid Shadow vessels and troops.

Beyond 2270, however, the future of the Technomages remains uncertain. Still unable to produce their own chrysalis, the mages cannot increase their numbers or replace losses to their ranks. With the Shadows gone, their future may be short indeed. The transcendence reached by Galen in his oneness with his implants also remains out of reach for the other mages, dooming them to a future of conflict, should things not change.

## Glossary:

**Chrysalis:** This is the first implant that a budding Technomage receives. It restricts the mage from casting the most powerful spells, and assists them in learning their new powers. As they grow and leave the ranks of initiates, eventually the chrysalis, which initially covers the back and head in a cowl, is removed, enabling full use of the mage's powers. Chrysalis are grown by the Shadows within living bodies, captured and used for this express purpose. When grown, they are cut out of the body, which dies, and are

then given to the mages when one of the Circle comes to the Shadows on regular occasion.

**Place of Power:** By implanting small portions of their chrysalis into a location, the mage is able to create a "Place of Power". In doing so, the mage is able to enhance his own power, so long as he remains in this place. The original place of power, a circle of stones used by the Circle or leadership council of the mages, echoes the stones and monuments on Za'Ha'Dum.

**The Tech:** This is what the mages call their implants. These implants quickly grow within the body of the mage, spreading through limbs and around organs. They produce healing organelles that can fix all but the most grievous wounds. They also draw upon the energy in the universe surrounding the mage, giving them powers that can only be described as magical.

**Flaying:** When a mage is judged to have broken the law of the Circle, or is a threat to the mages, he may be punished by flaying. Flaying is the most heinous punishment that can be visited upon a mage. Essentially it involves removing the implants within the mage. Due to their pervasiveness throughout the body of a mage, however, flaying involves cutting apart nearly the whole body, leaving the skin open like a flayed beast, and nearly always resulting in the death of the mage.

**The Circle:** This is the leadership council of the mages, formed by Weiriden after the last great war. Consisting of 5 members, they dictate the actions of the mages as a whole, and can mete out punishment as they feel it is needed. They also understand the true nature of the Tech, and accept from the Shadows replacement Chrysalis as needed.

**The Code:** The Code was created by Weiriden to enable the mages to fight the programming of the Shadows within their tech. By following the Code a mage was supposed to be able to control their impulses, and use their powers for good.

**Taratimude:** The Taratimude are the first known recipients of the Tech from the Shadows, though given the long history of the Shadows it is not out of the question for others to have received it in the past. Some of those Taratimude who survived the war and the destruction of their planet at their own hands helped form the Technomages.

**Seven Postulates:** These are the original 7 spells the Shadows created and intended for the Technomages to use. They are as follows.

- 1) Spell of Destruction: Forms an alternate universe, which crushes anything within its sphere of destruction.
- 2) Shadow Talk: Allows a mage to receive and send communications across the galaxy to the Shadows.
- 3) Shadow Skin: Creates a strong armored skin of black and grey Shadow tech around the mage, protecting him from harm.
- 4) Communicate with Shadow tech: Allows the mage to communicate with and control Shadow technology, including merging with ships and controlling Shadow tech based soldiers.
- 5) Plasma Bolt: This is an offensive weapon that fires a bolt of plasma from the hand of the mage.
- 6) Invisibility: This is a powerful form of invisibility, fully equal to the invisibility the Shadows use on themselves when traveling among younger races.
- 7) Conjure Wind: This base power and evolutions of it allows the mage to travel at incredible speed over vast distances on a platform.

**The Eye:** The Eye is the central computer the Shadows use to spy on the galaxy, as well as control and direct their forces of chaos and war. Wired into the planet of Za'Ha'Dum, the Eye is a huge living machine, with a powerful individual, far more powerful than that needed for a Shadow Cruiser or Dreadnaught, at its core. The great Technomage Weiriden once served as its central processing unit.

\* \* \*



# Who do you serve and who do you trust?



**GROPOS**

By ALEX ROBERTS

**E**NIGMATIC and powerful, the Technomages purport to serve none but their own, unfathomable purposes. Over much of the past 1000 years, Technomages have crossed the spaceways, learning, observing, and sometimes interfering in the affairs of various races. They are guided by the Circle, their leadership body; composed of a small number of elder mages.

Centauri mythology tells of a Technomage who, many years ago, helped the Centauri people defeat their competitors for Centauri prime, eventually exterminating them and leaving the Centauri race as sole inheritors of their birth planet. Other legends speak of an entire planet filled with billions of souls, silenced in mere days of terror and bloodshed. Be they rogue mages serving their own designs, or agents sent by the Circle, Technomages are formidable opponents.

## Special Rules:

**Activation:** Technomages are equipped with pseudo-magical technology that rivals that of the First Ones. They have sensors and probes that make them more aware of their surroundings than any younger race ground troops could possibly be. Any Technomage unit may activate for free along with another friendly unit. (Essentially you get two units activated at the same time.)

**Movement:** Although Technomages are attached to a friendly Battalion or Company command unit for initial deployment purposes, they may move independently and are not restricted by any command and control requirements. If a detachment of Technomages is purchased, each may act independently, though the

detachment must activate at the same time.

**Spells:** All spells are cast instead of shooting, as Technomages generally do not carry weapons, their magic usually being more than enough to deal with any opposition. Each stand may only cast one spell per turn, in place of regular shooting. They may target enemy units freely, but must be able to draw a line of sight unless otherwise noted. All spells also hit/take effect automatically unless otherwise noted.

Every Technomage has their own unique expertise when it comes to spells. Because of this, Technomage units must roll randomly for their spells. For each stand, roll a d10 for each spell that type of stand may have. Re-roll any duplicates.

- 1-2: Fireball
- 3-4: Illusory Monsters
- 5: Demons
- 6: Invisibility
- 7: Fly
- 8: Shield
- 9: Death Spikes
- 10: Roll again. On 1-8, see result above. On a 9-10: Sphere of Destruction

**Fireball:** A massive ball of





flame shoots from the mage's hands, enveloping their target in fire, causing flesh to evaporate and metal to melt. The stand attacks any single enemy vehicle or infantry stand within 10 inches with a DVA/DVD rating of 11. The Technomage must roll normally to hit the enemy stand.

**Illusory Monsters:** The Techno-mages create large holographic creatures to terrify their enemy. Any single enemy unit within 15 inches must make an immediate morale roll.

**Demons:** The Technomages create a small group of 3 dimensional creatures with physical form. These creatures attack and harass an enemy stand. Any single enemy infantry (any unit with DVD) unit within 12 inches is assaulted in close combat by a regular grade Demon stand with a CC rating of 5. The Demons cannot be hurt, and disappear immediately after their attack, which is resolved immediately during the Technomage's activation.

**Invisibility:** Until the Technomage's next activation, the Technomage stand gains +4 to their profile. Any single friendly infantry stand touching the Technomage may benefit from this bonus as well. This may not be used on any stand with an armor value.

**Fly:** This special spell is cast before movement during the Technomage's activation. During that activation, the Technomage stand may move at 3\* their regular movement. The multiplication is done before any modifiers based on order (such as rapid advance). Any single friendly infantry stand within 1 inch at the beginning of activation may accompany the Technomage to their destination. This may not include any unit with an armor value, including turrets. Typically this is only useful for moving recon units. The moved unit may not move or fire independently before or after during the same turn.

**Shield:** The Technomage stand shields themselves with an impenetrable wall of force. Until the Technomage's next activation, the stands Discipline is increased + 5. Any single friendly infantry stand touching the Technomage may benefit from this bonus as well.

**Death Spikes:** Large metal spikes sprout forth from the mage's mouth, heading with unerring accuracy towards their target. Although these spikes are not powerful enough to penetrate armored vehicles, they rip into unprotected bodies, boring deep into their spines causing a very painful death. An enemy stand within 15 inches is attacked with a DVD 12 attack.

**Sphere of Destruction:** One of the most powerful Technomage spells ever devised, this spell creates a parallel universe within the sphere, which quickly collapses, destroying anything within its confines. Any single enemy unit, vehicle or infantry, within 10 inches is instantly destroyed. Because of the strain of casting this spell, you must roll a d10 upon casting. If a 7-10 is rolled, the Technomage may not cast this spell or any other spell for one full turn (not counting the current activation).

## Technomage Units:

**Chrysalis Mages:** This stand consists of several young apprentice mages. Due to their inexperience, they must roll a d10 upon casting any spell. On an 8-10 the spell is not cast successfully. This stand has 1 spell rolled for on the above list.

**Technomages:** This stand consists of 2-4 Technomages. This stand has 2 spells rolled on the above spell chart.

**Elder Mages:** This stand consists of one Elder mage, and 1-2 assistants or follower Technomages. This stand has 3 spells rolled on the above spell chart.

## Deployment:

Any army may purchase one Technomage stand (no more), which starts the game attached to the Battalion or any Company Headquarters at the player's choice. As Technomages are often factionalized, and some go rogue, it is possible for both sides to have Technomages.

In scenarios based during the last war against the Shadows, 1000 years ago, Technomages were significantly more common. However, they served only the Shadows or their allies. Up to 3 Technomage stands may be purchased by any army allied with the Shadows.

## Cost:

Chrysalis Mage Stand:	18/36/--/--
Technomage Stand:	--/35/60/85
Elder Stand:	--/--/80/110

## Appendix:

Should one choose to use mages fully schooled in the arts of the Tech, either by the Shadows to lead their armies, or such resourceful mages as Galen, use the following spells and chart. Use the stat line for a regular Technomage stand, but increase points cost to --/60/85/130. In addition, these stands know all of the spells below automatically. All other rules remain the same.

**Spells:** (note that no spells may be cast before the game)

**Sphere of destruction:** As above.

**Shadow Skin:** When this spell is cast increase the discipline of the stand by 3 points. This remains in effect for 4 turns.

**Improved Invisibility:** This increases the stand's profile by +6 instead of +4 as above. It cannot assist nearby units however, only the casting stand. It remains in effect for 3 turns, and other spells may be cast while invisible.

**Plasma Bolt:** A powerful bolt strikes out against the mage's target. The stand attacks any single enemy vehicle or infantry stand within 10 inches with a DVA/DVD rating of 13/13. The Technomage must roll normally to hit the enemy stand.

**Fly:** As per above.

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## Technomage Pinnacle for FA

By ALEX ROBERTS

WITHIN the Technomage enclave exists a group of mages extremely skilled in building space vessels that incorporate Technomage magic. Upon the end of their apprenticeship, all Technomages receive one of these vessels to call their own. The Technomages bond with the vessel, though not to the extent that they bond with their implants, and the vessels can be controlled from some distance. Equipped with advanced stealth and illusory systems, along with strong weaponry, these vessels are difficult to bring to battle, and can cause significant damage to even large vessels.

## Special Rules:

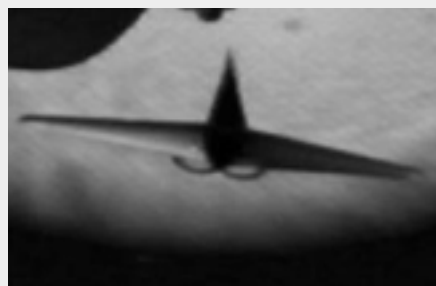
**Illusion Field:** This functions exactly as per the Centauri Chameleon field in TTV. It does not function against First One ships.

**Stealth Field:** The Technomage stealth field provides the following benefits. It provides no benefits against First One ships.

- 1) The Pinnacle is always considered to have a Jammer per MEMA.
- 2) So long as the Pinnacle did not fire in the previous pulse, it cannot be fired at by ANY enemy ship.
- 3) If the Pinnacle is more than 10 hexes away from all enemy units, it may be removed from the board. Plot movement normally, and do not place it on the board unless it opens fire. Once the vessel fires, it must be placed on the board, and cannot disappear until it is more than 10 hexes away from all enemy ships and units.

**LCV:** Although the Pinnacle is classed as an LCV, for all Fleet Action purposes treat it as a Medium vessel.

The Fleet Action data card for the Pinnacle can be found in the Attachments folder



# Abetting the Abbai



## Frontline scenarios

By KEITH FRYE

A scenario for Babylon 5 Fleet Action, set in the Dilgar War

### The Abba System, October 2232

AFTER relieving the Hyach, the allied Liberation Fleet turned their attention to rescuing the Abbai. The Abbai had been blockaded onto their home planet, Abba IV, by a powerful Dilgar fleet, reinforced by the garrisons of the conquered Abbai colonies of Utriel and Tirolus.

While outnumbered, the Dilgar resisted fiercely, accurately reckoning that if the Abba system fell, the road to the conquest of their homeworld, Omelos, would be open to the Liberation Fleet.

Assisting the Dilgar defence was the poor coordination of the allied fleets. The chain-of-command was more than occasionally blurry, and one EA commodore wryly observed that the operation flow-chart was so complicated, he actually reported to himself.

### OCCUPATION FORCE:

#### Dilgar Forces - Player 1:

1st Battle Squadron:  
1 x Targath CR(S), with  
4 flights Thorun II  
2 x Tratharti CR(G)  
Destroyer Group:  
4 x Ochlavita DD

#### Dilgar Forces - Player 2:

2nd Battle Squadron:  
1 x Targath CS, with  
4 flights Thorun II  
2 x Tratharti CR  
Fast Attack Group:  
4 x Jashakar FF

### LIBERATION FLEET:

#### Earth Alliance- Player 1

1st Battle Squadron:  
2 x Hyperion Alpha, each with  
1 flight Tiger  
1 x Hyperion Lambda  
Corvette Squadron:

3 x Olympus Alpha



#### Markab Theocracy - Player 2

1st Battle Squadron:  
2 x Shafab CR, each with  
2 flights Drofta  
1 x Talafat SC, with  
1 flight Drofta

Fleet Space Cover Group:

3 x Romak FFE

#### Abbai Matriarchate - Player 3

1st Defense Squadron  
2 x Lakara CR  
1 x Shyarie Elint Frigate

Frigate Group

2 x Tiraca FF

Carrier Group

1 x Miliani CV, with  
4 flights Kotha

2 x Tulati EF

### Victory Conditions:

Hold the field.

### Set Up:

Use the standard map.

The Liberation players secretly and individually prepare to enter the map per the Jump In rules. Once they have secretly determined their entry points the Dilgar player(s) set(s) up (25% of his force is on patrol as per the Jump In rules.)

Once the Allies begin to enter, roll for jump point drift as per the rules, but roll two d12 for distance. Note that the Abbai don't actually jump in - their squadrons represent a sally from their defensive perimeter as a demonstration of solidarity. Enter their squadrons as if they were jumping in, but shift them to the closest map edge.

### Special Notes:

To convert an SSD for the Abbai Tulati, simply remove the combat laser from a Tiraca. Subtract 30 points.

The Markab squadrons are designed to land that player in a difficult position - which is right and proper and very historical. For a more survivable force, mix the Romaks and Shafabs between two squadrons, then add the support ships. Without jump engines, the Romaks are dependent on the larger ships to enter the map, and as presented, the Romak squadron requires the Shafab squadron to hold open the jump point from hyperspace to allow the frigates to enter (and if the Dilgar are anywhere near the Romaks, they're a whole loaf of toast).

### Historical Comments:

Poor communications and coordination plagued the early phase of the Abba campaign, resulting in substantial losses to the Liberation Fleet. The Markab especially suffered extensive casualties. After several failed Allied attacks, at the end of the second week, and while fighting on multiple in-system fronts, the Dilgar withdrew en masse to Tirolus. Abba IV was free.

\* \* \*

# Down-time on the EAS Marathon

Test of wills part 4  
**Fiction**  
By **THOMAS WELLER**

IT HAD been two days since the battle with the raiders, and Captain Jagerson still could not figure out how a small time operation like that could have taken down an Omega class Destroyer. They were a large raider group, but they still lacked the firepower to take out the Corinth without taking damage themselves. Besides, raiders were not known for taking on military ships of the line. It just did not feel right.

Later that day in the gymnasium, Cpt. Jagerson was finishing his warm up excersises. Today was going to be the day he would get the better of Lt. Cmdr. Hideshi. Hideshi, the squadron hand-to-hand combat champion was going to the fleet championships next month. Jagerson liked Hideshi. He had a cool head under fire and cared about his men. This was a great asset in a commander, and it was truly rare in a fighter pilot. However, Hideshi's attitude had taken a turn in the past few days. He had lost two men in the Battle of Beta 412

Jagerson stopped in front of the mirror to look at himself. He had changed little in all his years. The gray was starting to creep in at the temples of his otherwise blonde hair, but his six foot two inch muscled physique was still there. Jagerson looked back at how hard it had been to stay in shape. Back when he first joined Earthforce, only stations contained gravity generating systems. His first posting was on the old Olympus Corvette EAS Swordfish, a metal box with four rockets bolted on and some weapons. The only time it had gravity was when it fired up the thrusters to give the ship a small gravity field for a while. It was not until he received command of the Juno that he was able to have gravity under him again. Now with the help of Sheridan's Alliance the Earth Alliance was restructuring their fleet as quickly as possible. The new Warlock, Cronos, Apollo, and Delphi classes all had artificial gravity systems integral to their design. This new development would make the Earth Alliance ships capable of longer endurance than ever before.

Just then Lieutenant Commander Michael Hideshi walked into the gym. His small frame stood in stark contrast to Captain Jagerson's. He was five foot seven inches. His Asian heritage stood as an opposite pole to Jagerson's Nordic roots. Hideshi had grown up in a city called Orlando in the North American Confederation, and his family owned a martial arts dojo there. This is where Mike had learned his skills, and he was good. Jagerson had a new plan to try on him today, and if it worked he would feel much better. Jagerson always felt that Mike never really

went for his maximum potential during these sparring matches between him and the captain.

"Good morning, Captain," Hideshi told his CO.

"Mike, remember in the Gym you can call me Alex," Jagerson replied.

"Very well, Captain."

"Ok, fine, lets get started alright?"

The two men stood inside the circle and, facing one another, they bowed. Then the two took their stances and prepared to engage in hand-to-hand combat. Jagerson really enjoyed these matches, for he found a great opponent in Mike Hideshi. For Hideshi this was a way to release tension. He had lost two men in the battle of Beta 412. He really hated to lose anybody in his command. It was Jagerson who made the first move. He started with a simple kata that drew an opponent into a more complex defense, but Hideshi had seen this tactic before. His counter came very quickly and almost forced Jagerson out of the circle. But to Hideshi's surprise Jagerson's attack was a feint, and Hideshi found himself off balance and being shoved out of the circle. Turning to find a Cheshire cat grin on Jagerson, Lt. Cmdr. Hideshi could not help but laugh at his own mistake. He had become complacent these last couple of days, and this was exactly what he needed to wake up. The two fought for another 30 minutes with Hideshi getting the upper hand, Jagerson still scored more points with other new maneuvers that Hideshi had not seen.

After the match Hideshi turned to Jagerson and asked, "Where did you learn those maneuvers?"

"I spoke with your grandfather about your behavior of late," Jagerson replied.

"Now I remember. He used to give me a good thrashing to snap me out of my day dreams."

"He told me how to perform some of the maneuvers, and we decided it might be best to try this approach. I'm just glad it worked. Finding a new wing commander this late in the game would be difficult," Jagerson added.

"I guess I have not been myself lately, Sir."

"Nope, but your Grandpa told me how to help, and I hope it did."

"It did and I have the bruises to prove it. For an old guy you sure can kick hard."

"Just remember this old guy can still kick you around," laughed Captain Jagerson.

Both men shared a brief silence as each saw a kindred spirit in the other.

Just then Commander Baticci walked into the gym. He looked out of place in this area. His body had not seen the gym in some time and the small paunch around his middle was slowly growing. Baticci was from a small village just outside Rome in the European Union. His family owned a small restaurant. His mother had been mortified that he was going into Earthforce instead of staying in the family business, but

young Edgar Baticci wanted to see the stars up close.

"Sir, We have been able to recover some of the data in the message buoy we found on the Llort shuttle." Cmdr. Baticci said.

"Well what did it say?"

"I thought it best that I come and get you, so you can watch the recording yourself."

"Then let's go."

"Mind if I tag along, Captain?" Hideshi asked

"Not at all Mike."

The trio made way for the Captain's office. Once they arrived Baticci told the communications officer to patch the signal through to the Captain's comm-panel. As the playback started, the fuzzy picture of the Corinth's bridge took shape. The exterior view of the ship showed multiple jump points opening in the immediate vicinity. Out of these vortexes came three Narn heavy cruisers opening fire on the Corinth. After the recording was over the three stood there in silence. The mood in the room was somber and cold.

"I can't believe it. Why would the Narn attack us?" Hideshi was the first to speak.

"I don't know, but the markings seemed a little off. I did not recognize the fleet number," Jagerson replied.

"We have to tell Earthdome about this sir," Baticci blurted.

"Yes we do. Communications, open a gold channel priority to fleet command."

The screen lit up with the face of Admiral Mathews, the commanding officer of the First Fleet. "This is Mathews, go ahead Captain Jagerson."

"Sir, we have found the party responsible for the attack on the Corinth," Jagerson told his commander.

"Who is it?"

"The ships match Narn configurations, but the fleet markings are like none I have ever seen before."

"The question is why would the Narn wish to attack us?" Admiral Mathews thought aloud.

"I am not sure. Sir, what are your orders?"

"We have to find out who and why this attack took place. I want you to head to Babylon 5. The Narn government still keeps a representative there. You will receive further instructions in transit. Leave your squadron to continue to patrol the area. I don't want to alarm the civilian traffic around the station with an Earth Battle Group on the doorstep. Mathews Out."

"Helm set course for Babylon 5. Communications inform the squadron to continue to patrol this area until relieved. Captain Zeneca on Marathon is in command till we return," Captain Jagerson ordered.

**To be continued...**

# All that glitters is not gold... The hunt for Shadow tech

BattleForce December 2001: Treasure Hunt  
Coordinated by CHRIS NASIPAK

THE RACE we know as The Shadows considered the planet of Za'Ha'Dum to be a holy place. They built their cities there, what passed for homes and factories and schools and libraries for this most ancient of races. When the Wars of Darkness ended, they abandoned all of that, boarding their ships and flying off beyond the rim. Much of what they left behind was destroyed when their booby-traps shattered the planet.

But not all. Fragments remained behind, and now have the ships of the younger races come to see what they might find, and what they might be able to learn from these fragments. Of course, it isn't always that easy....

## SETUP:

Attach a single Fast Freighter to each player's fleet to carry the recovered artifacts.

**Player A** - choose a 7,000 point fleet from one of the Younger Races, including at least one Scout, or use one of the pre-selected Battle Forces. Start anywhere on the 01xx hexrow.

**Player B** - choose another 7,000 point fleet, or a pre-selected Battle Force. Start anywhere on the 42xx hexrow.

**Map Layout:** Each player should select 30 counters to represent Asteroid hexes. Alternate placing them on the map between the 10xx and 32xx columns. If maneuvering should require additional space, place another map below or above the original and add asteroid counters in the same fashion. Each player's fleet will enter from their choice of hexes

**Finding Treasure:** The key to victory in this scenario is finding, acquiring, and successfully retrieving items of Shadow technology. Each

asteroid hex may contain one - or it may contain a trap. The only way to find either is to locate them via ELINT or Minesweeper sensor scanning (the Shadow technology is, at the small scale of the artifacts remaining, invisible to normal sensors). A particular ship may only scan each hex once during the scenario.

**Scanning Procedure:** For each hex to be scanned roll 1d20 and add the number of sensor points allocated to the scan. Consult the following table to see what might be found. ELINT units may use all of their sensor points as they wish; Minesweeper units may utilize only their Minesweeping Bonus.

2 - 15	Nothing is found
16-18	1d6 cargo points worth of artifacts*
19-20	2d6 cargo points worth of artifacts*
21+	

\* - A roll of '6' on any of these dice indicates that a booby-trap has been activated. Treat the hex as containing a Captor Mine of Signature 6, firing as a Medium Phasing Pulse Cannon, Armor 4 Structure 8. A mined hex contains no recoverable artifacts.

Loading cargo aboard ship can be accomplished by shuttlecraft only. Each shuttlecraft may carry one point worth of artifacts at a time. A ship with no Cargo space of its own may store one artifact per Shuttle space in its hangar that contains a Shuttle and two per hangar box that is empty (contains neither shuttle, hangar, nor anything else). Artifacts can be stolen by boarding parties that successfully execute a "Hostage Rescue" mission on the Hangar or Cargo area containing them.

**Victory Conditions:** Square the number of Artifacts successfully retrieved. Multiply the result by the total BPV of surviving ships and fighters (count standard shuttles as 10 BPV for the purposes of this calculation and remember to

deduct for expended special missiles). The player with the higher total has retrieved the best balance of artifacts recovered to expense of the mission.

## Suggested Variants

- Additional players can join, simply move setups to space all fleets involved around the board.
- Add an automated (younger-races CPU) Shadow vessel, left behind to guard the ruins
- Add a deliberately-placed Shadow minefield (this requires a third player to 'play' the mines)
- For a quicker game, allow 5 points of normal EW to equal one point of ELINT EW for scanning purposes

## FLEET SELECTION

### Hyach Expeditionary Fleet (Tarek Okail)

Irokai Kam - 1025 (Navigation Specialist)  
Irokai Kam - 1025 (Tactics, Engine Specialist)  
Tachila Kor - 750 (ELINT, Engine Specialist)  
6 Dovoeh 420  
17 Darthas 1190  
Senchlat Kes - 775 (ELINT, Repair Specialist)  
Okath Kat - 600 (Defense Specialist)  
Okath Kat - 600 (Called Shot Specialist)  
Okath Kat - 600 (Called Shot Specialist)  
Total Points: 6985

The Hyach are very interested in Shadow technology, not for the advances in weapons, or armor, or sensors, but rather for the noted Shadow expertise in biotechnology, biology, and genetics. The Geriontarchs feel that Shadow technology may provide clues to revitalizing and stabilizing the Hyach genetic code, thus saving the race from eventual oblivion.

This task force is designed to split into two groups. One group, consisting of the Senchlat Kes and the three Okath Kat, will move ahead



using their agility to maneuver through the asteroid field to scan the more distant areas for the tech cache. The two Irokai Kam and the Tachila Kor, meanwhile, search the nearer areas of the asteroid field and act as a heavy strike group to back up the faster elements. The Dartha fighters are suited primarily for CAP, but can be sent on strike missions to take out enemy systems via called shots, while the Dovoch fighters protect whichever ship acquired the tech cache. Note that the Navigation and Engine specialists in the heavy strike group can provide some fairly drastic maneuvering advantages; this is a major benefit in an asteroid field. Further, should enemy vessels have acquired part of the tech cache, the Called Shot Specialists on the two Okath Kat ships are a major help in disabling a target. If Hyach Breaching Pods are published, replace the short flight of Darthas with 5 breaching pods (provided that the pods cost no more than 73 points each).

## **Centauri Reconnaissance-In-Force Fleet (Gianni Liburdi)**

1 x Command Squadron @ 3,575  
2 x Search & Destroy Squadrons @ 1,695 ea.  
Total BPV: 6,965  
This fleet consists of three separate squadrons, with the command elements anchoring the center field while the S&D units cover the flanks. Because reconnaissance is the primary tasking, every ship in the fleet is both fast and maneuverable, so as to cover great distances in short order. In addition, every squadron has an ELINT vessel present to provide both unrivaled sensor coverage and a decisive EW advantage in combat. Should opposition be encountered, the fleet usually has enough firepower to deal with anything of equal or lesser strength, or the ability to outrun and outmaneuver a larger force.

### **Command Squadron Composition:**

1 x Dargan Strike Cruiser  
2 x Centurion Attack Cruisers  
1 x Maximus Defense Frigate  
12 x Rutarian Strike Fighters

The Dargan earns the role of flagship not only for being the most advanced ship in the Centauri Royal Navy, but also because of its role as a Combat Scout and the confusion it may sow through judicious use of its Chameleon Sensor Suite. The Centurions provide the bulk of the fleet's long and medium range firepower, while the Maximus rides out in front of the squadron to cover it from incoming fighters and weapons fire. The Rutarian stealth fighters can be employed as high-speed search units, or for lightning strikes on targets of opportunity.

### **Search & Destroy Squadron Composition:**

1 x Vorchar Warscout  
2 x Vorchan Warship  
1 x Maximus Defense Frigate

The Vorchan hull is one of the most commonly employed by the Centauri, so it should come as no surprise that it makes an appearance here.

The Vorchar provides the squadron with superior detection abilities, while the Vorchans provide the bulk of the anti-ship firepower and a Maximus provides point guard in the same way as for the Command elements.

N.B. The high speeds and great number of ships with jump drives also provide an added security measure, should the fleet run afoul of overwhelming opposition. In such a scenario, at least some units should be able to escape and bring whatever vital information they uncovered back to the Centauri Admiralty, who may then send in a much larger force if the situation warrants it.

## **Earth Alliance (Peter Michalenka)**

Oracle (Gamma) - ELINT req. - 600  
Hermes (Beta) - Priority Trans - 420  
Starfury (Aurora) flight - 342  
Hyperion (Gamma) - 600 Standard load out (2BP, 12 Assault Shuttles)  
Hyperion (Theta)[x2] - 1410  
Starfury (Aurora) flight [x2] - 684  
Omega (Gamma) - Command - 1100  
Starfury (Aurora) flight [x2] - 684  
Starfury (Aurora gamma) flight - 366 6 y-msls ea - 72  
Thunderbolt flight - 480 4 basic msls ea - 192 2 dummies ea - 12  
6 long range missiles - 36  
1 y-msl reload - 2  
Total: 7000

The fleet is organized to handle a dig for artifacts. The Hyperion gamma has the shuttles and breaching pods to move crews to dig sites, and provides an additional Hyperion hull to help confuse IDs some. Any artifacts recovered will be placed on the Hermes, which will remain to the rear of the force if confronted, and run if the fight goes against the fleet. The Aurora gammas are included to help stop the traditional Raider scum from interfering with the operation. The reliance primarily on capital hulls is due to the distance from EA space, the smaller vessels seemed a little out of place for a long duration mission.

In battle the fleet would try to gain fighter superiority, and use the heavy lasers of the destroyer and cruiser to cripple high priority targets. As above the Hermes would always be prepared to run from the fight, and would probably restrict itself to using the type-1 missiles to provide limited fire support. The Oracle would provide either fleet defensive jamming or enhance heavy laser targeting, depending on range and opposing force composition.

## **Gaim Exploratory Squadron (Matt Smoot)**

1 Tiac Long Range Explorer (720 pts)  
1 Shamor Battle Scout (750 pts)  
12 Reska Light Fighters (456 pts)  
6 Kasta Torpedo Fighters (264 pts)  
18 fighter missiles (120 pts)  
1 Sulo Carrier (600 pts)

36 Koist Medium Fighters (1440 pts)  
2 Kuach Minesweeping Corvettes (850 pts)  
4 Hadros Patrol Frigates (1300 pts)  
2 Rafa Packet Torpedo Gunboats (450 pts)  
Scouts will move through the belt scanning as they go. Also, they will work together to provide long range laser fire against large threats. The Sulo will provide fighter support as well as flak for the scouts. The Kuach Corvettes will provide general-purpose support, helping to smack down any defenses left in the belt or enemy vessels going after the scouts. The Hadros and Rafas will flit through the belt seeing what they can find and providing escort to the larger ships. The fighters are for intercepting other fighters and taking down enemy scout vessels. (An alternative would be to drop the Kastas and buy a few breaching pods for the fleet.)

## **Llort Acquisition Group (Tim Jordan)**

Many races went to these asteroid belts and other ancient places looking for buried treasure so to speak. However, with gold rushes like these, oft times rather unscrupulous beings are drawn to the area, such as raiders and pirates. Of course our friends the Llort would scoff at being called raiders. After all, everyone else is looking for hard to find treasures in these places, and Llort hands are NOT made for mining... Its just easier to take/borrow the items from those who've been so kind to dig up these fine discoveries. So here you have the Llort Battleforce.

1 Fwellgon Raiding Scout (800)  
1 Trathor Assault Carrier w/expert targeter on forward block and 2 extra marine contingents (710)  
12 Lellat-A fighters (480)  
6 Aslt Shuttles (180)  
6 Breaching Pods (240)  
1 Erlorra Raiding Cruiser (600)  
12 Lellat-A fighters (480)  
1 Govall Bombard Destroyer (700)  
1 Terillon Patrol Frigate (425)  
4 Allovan Attack Frigates (2000)  
2 BP's each (400)  
Total Cost 6995

This fleet idea came to me when I noticed that the Llort aren't limited by the number of breaching pods they carry so long as they have one normal shuttle, and spend the usual 10 points to convert a normal shuttle bay into a BP bay.

Tactics: The Assault ship, and the 4 attack frigates take the point, attempting to capture ships (or "rescue" the cargo), once the enemy is softened up a bit by the Govall's missiles and ion torps. The fighters are needed primarily to keep other fighters at bay, and the remaining larger ships coordinate and troubleshoot (preferably with that big Mag Gun).

\* \* \*

# An argument to revisit B5W ship point calculations

B5W Point Costing Analysis

By GARETH SMITH

(Damnation)

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RECENTLY, there has been another discussion on the point cost of certain units/races on the forums. As with many of the previous discussions on ship point costs, it hit certain favourites. As a discussion, this never really seems to move from these points, and no common view comes to the fore. It simply goes quiet and then gets resurrected in a couple of month's time. And yet, given the mechanism that AoG seems to have adopted for determining a ship's point value, based on opinion and testing, the point issue is actually quite relevant. But I think as a group we don't discuss ship points in a rational manner. As a result AoG is not obliged nor should they be to do anything to alter the point cost of any unit.

## The first argument.

In every discussion, someone at some point will bring up the White Star. It will be listed as being too cheap because "In the hands of an expert" it causes ridiculous carnage. The problem with this statement is that skill has no bearing on the point cost of a unit. Any ship in the game played by a skilled player will do better than its listed point cost if playing against a person of lesser skill. That is the mark of a skilled player. The problem with the White Star is not its point cost but that its performance is more affected by the skill of the player than most other units in the game. When you stop and look at it, you have a medium unit that costs more than many mainline capital ships. And it is not particularly tougher than other medium ships - the shields give an edge against certain weapon systems but are not perfect. A single laser or ballistic weapon hit can ruin its day. They have at times been rendered ineffective by relatively minor hits - all that you have to do is take out the Neutron Laser, a 15 point hit, and the ship is in trouble. For 750 points, for a medium ship that goes bang like all mediums do, having vulnerability like that on top is a bit unusual. I have no problem with the points cost of the White Star.

## The second argument.

Related to the White Star discussion, you get statements along the lines of "that race is over pointed I always lose with them" or the reverse of "that race is under pointed I always lose playing against them". The problem with these statements is the lack of supporting information. I used to think that EA was over pointed, given you had to bring so many fighters along to get ships on the table. However, once I figured out how to make use of the fighters, things worked much better. I am reasonably convinced that skill and incorrect race selection are much more likely the cause of perceived racial point cost imbalances than the actual point cost of a race's ships. Many people seem to be playing races that they do not have the mindset to play correctly. In order to get the best out of say, the Drazi, you have to be able to think in a Drazi way to get their ships to perform for you. I get the feeling that a lot of people are playing the races that look good rather than the races they would be good at playing. Skill is again, as with the White Star, often an explanation. If the player who plays the supposedly under pointed race is better than you then it will appear that the race is under pointed, even if it is not. Whenever I change race for a while, I always expect to do worse with them for the first few games as I am not as skilled in their use as someone playing them for a while. It's no reason to start complaining about their points cost.

## The Third Argument.

A third item that sometimes surfaces in point cost discussions is fixed or floating maps, and the ability of certain ships to perform retrograde manoeuvres. As I understand it, the point costs were set using a fixed map. I believe this to have been the correct thing to do, as there are some inherent problems in using floating maps, and by extension the retrograde. In B5, battles occurred around fixed points for the main part, be that a planet, a merchant convoy, station or even a mothership. Fights were for a reason and if the other side wanted to run away you let them. Barring the Drazi, people don't pick a fight for the hell of it. Any sane captain facing a fleet conducting a retrograde manoeuvre simply lets it

go and then occupies the territory it left behind. The retrograde is a game tactic of limited real use - "The Dilgar fleet is approaching the planet. Quick, retrograde the fleet!". Switch to graphic of mass drivers pulverising the planet while the defending fleet sails off into the horizon. Rarely is it necessary for ships to charge into a retrograde. Even in SFB, the home of the original retrograde, it required the consent of your opponent for it to work. The only valid time it could be employed was when a strategic unit such as a fleet repair dock was under attack and the defenders were towing it away under tractor. Then the retrograde made sense. Doing it just because there are a few ships running away from you may have been the correct Klingon response but that didn't make it any less stupid. Any idiot who charges after a retrograding fleet without needing to deserves what happens next. However, I do think that B5Wars could do with being played on a slightly larger fixed map as the ones that come with the game are little bit small for certain races. If anyone remembers the old TSR Star Frontiers game, their space combat system was played on an SFB sized hex map. The game also came with a small A4 sheet of hexes that was to be used whenever ships strayed over the map edge to give them a few extra hexes to turn and stay in the game. A similar idea in B5Wars might be useful.

## The case for point changes.

Having said the above, there is still a case for altering the point cost of certain ships. The problem is, without a formula calculating the value of a ship, how do you go about determining if there is an imbalance whilst ruling out player skill? There is a means, which is relatively straightforward, which should work. And that is to compare the problem ship with at least two other ships of the same class of the same points total (or as close as possible) and determine if the fight between each ship is as fair as the equal points cost indicates. Ideally one ship should be biased towards close range fights and one towards longer range fights. As an example of an under pointed ship, take the Narn G'Sten. As an example of an over pointed ship take the Brakiri Avioki.

TABLE ONE	G'Sten	Hyperion Alpha	Targath
Points Cost	575	575	580
Engine Thrust	12	6	10
Turn Cost	2/3	1	2/3
Turn Delay	2/3	1	2/3
Accel/Decel	3	3	3
Defence	15/16	11/13	15/15
Engine Efficiency	3/1	4/1	3/1
Initiative Bonus	+1	+0	+0
Power	+2	+0	+0
Sensor	8	6	9
Front Structure	5 / 52	4 / 52	4 / 33
Side Structure	4 / 42	4 / 60	4 / 39
Rear Structure	4 / 50	4 / 42	4 / 33
Primary Structure	6 / 50	4 / 54	5 / 40

**Centreline Volley:**  
G'Sten: 1x Heavy Pulse Cannon4 x Medium Pulse Cannon2 x Light Pulse Cannon  
Hyperion A: 5 x Med Plasma Cannon2 x Particle Cannon3 x Standard Particle Beam  
Targath: 2 x Heavy Bolter2 x Quad Pulsar2 x Scatter-Pulsar

TABLE TWO	Avioki	Hyperion Zeta	Centurion
Points Cost	725	725	725
Engine Thrust	15 (G)	7	12
Turn Cost	1	1	2/3
Turn Delay	1/2	1	1/2
Accel/Decel	4	3	3
Defence	14/18	11/13	15/17
Engine Efficiency	4/1	4/1	3/1
Initiative Bonus	+0	+0	+2
Power	+0	+0	+0
Sensor	8	6	10
Front Structure	6 / 36	5 / 52	6 / 44
Side Structure	6 / 48	4 / 60	5 / 42
Rear Structure	6 / 36	4 / 42	5 / 44
Primary Structure	6 / 44	5 / 54	7 / 44

**Centreline Volley:**  
Avoki: 4 x Graviton Beam2 x Graviton Pulsar  
Hyperion Z: 3 x Railgun2 x Medium Pulse Cannon3 x Standard Particle Beam  
Centurion: 3 x Battle Laser2 x Matter Cannon4 x Twin Array

In order to make a case for raising the cost of the G'Sten, I need to pick a couple of ships with similar, ideally identical point costs. At 575, the G'Sten is one of the cheapest cap ships in the game but I found two others to compare it against, the Alpha Model Hyperion and the Dilgar Targath Strike Cruiser. The Targath is 5 points dearer but is still close enough to allow an effective comparison.

See table #1.

Taking the statistics of the ships into account, in a one on one duel, who do you think will be the more consistent winner? In the G'Sten versus Hyperion match, both ships need to close. The Hyperion will be disadvantaged in the close battle by the initiative bonus on the G'Sten and its general lack of manoeuvrability. If it does not manage to get a volley off before the G'Sten gets in behind it, it will lose the fight. In the rear there would be only the 3 SPB and one Medium Plasma Cannon as the G'Sten flits back and forth firing two Medium Pulse Cannons each round with the odd Heavy Pulse Cannon shot. The Interceptors will help to slow things down but the Hyperion would be relying on luck at that point. The G'Sten versus Targath match is more interesting, but the telling thing is again the initiative bonus and the weak nose on the Targath,

which if it falls off will take most of its heavy weapons with it. The Targath can expect to fire before the G'Sten but requires two Heavy Bolter hits and two Scatter-Pulsar hits in addition to take the nose off. Conversely, the G'Sten requires only 3 heavy pulses or 5 medium pulses to blow the nose off the Targath. The G'Sten however, can continue to put up a good fight from its side mounted Medium Pulse Cannons, and keep its primary out of arc while so doing. In both cases I would say that the G'sten is the odds on favourite to win the fight. And yet it costs less than the Targath and the same as the Hyperion. How much it should increase by is open to discussion.

In order to make a case for lowering the cost of the Avioki, it was much easier to find identically pointed ships. I chose the Centauri Centurion and Earth Hyperion Zeta, the rail cruiser.

See Table #2.

The fight between the Avioki and the Hyperion would be expected to go in the Hyperion's favour, mainly due to the lower defence numbers and the fact that the Avioki will always be in arc of one of the Railguns even if it wins initiative. Also, it has so few external systems, Railgun hits are much more likely to hit its weak structure blocks rather than expend themselves on

weapons or thrusters. Also, once in close the two Graviton Pulsars are no match for the 3 SPB and Medium Pulse Cannon. Unless the Avioki scores a couple of really good hits as the Hyperion closes and continues to win initiative after it closes it probably will not win the fight 50% of the time. The match against the Centurion is a lot worse. The Battle Laser is non-interceptable, faster firing and backed by more EW than the Avioki has. Worse, unlike the Hyperion, the Centurion has a significant initiative bonus and its basic manoeuvring capabilities are better. I don't see it beating the Centurion on any significant number of occasions. As with the G'Sten, I leave the new points to the reader's discretion.

## AoG Approval.

It's all very well for us to agree that a ship should have its point cost changed, but AoG seem to have been reluctant to do that up until now. I can understand this - once they do it, they open the floodgates to a lot of spurious requests that will take a lot of time to wade through. There is no way I can see AoG doing anything if that is the case. They have enough issues with getting through their existing schedule as it is. And as it is, most of the point costs actually aren't that bad. I wouldn't want to make 5 or 10 point changes, I reckon a change would have to be a least 20 points to warrant doing in the first place.

So something else has to be devised. I think the forums should be the place to do this - multiple points of view are required to ensure that any proposed change is discussed as completely as possible before making it. This will be especially true if trying to decide exactly what a ships new points cost would be. What would be needed is a new forum where topics can be opened on specific ships. Anyone can open a topic but AoG would appoint three or more people who would be authorised to approve a points change, any approval requiring that all be in agreement. Once they do, it would be communicated via the forums and Babcom. For those not on the Net it could be a small section added into any of the Showdowns products. Probably they would only become completely official once they appear in a Showdowns to prevent problems at tournaments, but those of us who use the net could use the revised points once they appear in a Babcom. Also, with Ships of the Fleet II coming out a revised listing could appear there.

## Conclusion

I don't know how practical this idea is in real life but I do think something needs to be done to address the point cost of a small number of ships. AoG did a reasonable job in balancing the ships in 2nd Ed but they are only human and to not have a few slip through the cracks would be unusual. Also, over time new tactics and play styles evolve which may make some of the point costs a little suspect. For both of these reasons it would be a good idea to come up with a means to revisit the point cost of certain ships.

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## **BABCOM**

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# The Wanderer

## **WANDERER**

### **Unique Ship** (Special Deployment Rules)

"Visions of the Wanderer" is a remarkable vessel even amongst other Walker ships. No other vessel has gone as far, had contact with as many alien races, or collected as much data on strange spatial phenomena.

The crew of the Wanderer were amongst the first Walkers to evolve into beings of pure energy, and it was due to their experiences that the evolutionary leap wasn't as costly as it is for most races. (In the process of evolving from one state of existence to another, most races lose upwards of 99% as not being able to make the leap. The Walker's evolution, thanks to the records and statistics provided by the Wanderer, resulted with a casualty rate of less than 15%.)

The Wanderer is the vessel most likely to be seen in the Babylon 5 Wars current time line, as it has been back and forth Beyond the Rim several times. The ship was away during the battle of Coriana VI, and the crew were known to go against the advice of the Transcendental Beings from time to time.

The Triad Aspect of Chaos once picked the commander of the Wanderer as an especially interesting subject for 'study', resulting in the only known defeat of an actual Tri, not its constructs, in battle. Suffice to say that if the Wanderer can find a reason to return to normal space, it will.

### **Special Rules:** Weapon Systems

The commander of the Wanderer is extremely suspi-



### *Shipyard Supervisor*

By **MATT PLONSKI**

cious of any unknown situation. Although still confident that the ship's technical superiority will prevail in the end, the ship's crew is often directed to power systems in their offensive modes as a precaution. Therefore the weapons on the Wanderer may begin every scenario fully charged unless specified otherwise.

### **Special Rules:** Elite Crew

The Wanderer's crew has seen everything and been everywhere. They have traveled to and from Thirdspace several times, and faced enemies far more powerful. The vessel has the ship enhancement 'Elite Crew'. All bonuses are included in the ship control sheet where possible. The Wanderer may not take any other enhancements.

### **Special Rules:** Deployment

The Wanderer may be taken in Primordial or Ancient time frames without any changes. A Walker player may take the Wanderer in a battle as the only vessel (there is nothing else) or if there are at least five additional Traveler-class vessels present. The Wanderer rarely joins other Walker ships, and is usually encountered on its own. In the occasions where the Wanderer did fight in a war, the fleets deployed were truly enormous.

\* \* \*