Twilight's Dawn

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Welcoming You I Am!

Welcoming you I am to The Great Machine. Place of great knowledge it is -- and home to nephews of mine. Zathras they are all of them named. Say they make me proud I would, but lie not Yoda do.

Found my way here I did by touching large blue crystal in ancient Jedi hall. Left on by a young padowan it was. Very unresponsible the action was. Much learnings that young one yet have. The Force I will use to return to home. A galaxy far, far away it is.

In good repair the Great Machine is not. Many quakes hit and repair Zathras did not. Too much time he spent chasing Fwiffo with pointy stick. Picked up a book I did that had from the shelf fallen. Told of a great fleet of mechanical threats of untold power the book did. Encounter the Zentraedi I hope I do not. The Force is strong in them.

Going now I must. Young Master Skywalker undercover is operating in the Terran Confederation. Colonel Blair they think he is, but fool them he shall. The Rebellion he brings to them.

Leave you with a moral I shall. Green it is not easy being. Gorn ship captain at retirement home agrees with the moral I tell you now. Lament we do over weekly game of shuffleboard we play.

UNCLE YODA,
LANDLORD OF THE GREAT MACHINE

Contents

Richard Biggs Dead

Obituary From the LA Times
By Elaine Woo, Times Staff Writer

Richard Biggs
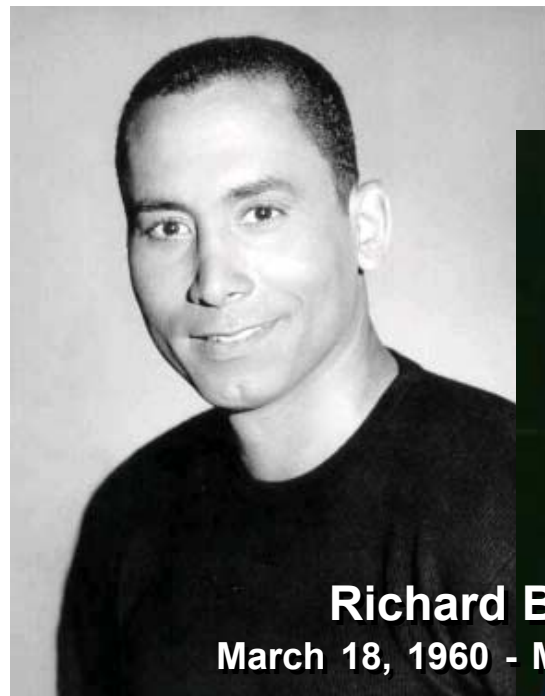**March 18, 1960 - May 22, 2004**

Richard Biggs, a television actor known for his featured roles in such series as "Babylon 5" and "Days of Our Lives," died Saturday after collapsing suddenly at his San Fernando Valley home. He was 44.

He was taken to Providence Saint Joseph Medical Center in Burbank, where he died, said Caren Day, a family spokeswoman. The cause was a tear in his aorta.

Biggs, a graduate of the USC School of Theatre, portrayed Dr. Stephen Franklin on the science-fiction series "Babylon 5," which was broadcast in syndication and later on the TNT network from 1991 to 1998. He also played a doctor on the NBC soap "Days of Our Lives" for five years beginning in the 1980s.

More recently, he appeared on the Lifetime channel dramas "Any Day Now" and "Strong Medicine" and earned favorable notices onstage in Los Angeles productions of Shakespeare's "Lear" and John DiFusco's Vietnam War play "Tracers."

Born in Columbus, Ohio, Biggs developed a passion for acting in high school after performing in a community production of "The Wiz." He won a scholarship to USC, where he majored in performing arts. While in college he taught acting at 32nd Street Magnet School near the USC campus and later at the Will Geer Theatricum Botanicum in Topanga. He eventually developed his own curriculum, which he offered to schools across the country.

Hearing-impaired since boyhood, Biggs devoted much of his off-camera time to raising money for a private Orange County school that serves both deaf and hearing children.

In 1997 he was invited to direct a benefit presentation of A.R. Gurney's "Love Letters" at the Irvine Barclay Theatre. The proceeds went to the Rancho Viejo School for the deaf and hearing-impaired in Rancho Santa Margarita.

The next year Biggs brought most of the cast of "Babylon 5" to the school for another fundraising event, which attracted fans from around the country. He also sold autographed pictures of himself at the sci-fi conventions he frequently attended and gave the proceeds to the school so it could purchase playground and other equipment.

His own hearing problems were diagnosed when he was 13. Completely deaf in one ear and partly deaf in the other, Biggs wore a hearing aid and learned sign language as an adult after doctors told him that he one day would lose all his hearing.

He is survived by his wife of six years, Lori Kay Biggs; two sons, Hunter, 2, and Richard James III, 4; his parents, retired Col. Richard and Delores Biggs of Spokane, Wash.; and four sisters.

His family has established a college fund for his sons. Donations may be sent to the Benefit of the Children of Richard Biggs II, c/o Washington Mutual Bank, 840 N. San Fernando Blvd., Burbank, CA 91502.

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Twilight's Dawn:
The First Glimpse of the Ingalli

Duke Jayrath Kovrosis

An Ingalli war hero and veteran of the Wars of Unification, Duke Kovrosis led many excursions into the Karandar system during the fourteen-year conflict. Miraculously, Kovrosis survived all of the campaigns of which he took part and was awarded nine separate commendations by the Instran emperor for valor in battle.

Kovrosis was instrumental in the development of the Ansali school of tactical ideology that would govern the Ingalli military until after the end of the Ingalli war with the Kilhansu League in the 1820s and 30s.

Excerpt from the Encyclopedia Escalatia, 2208 Edition

A Prelude to Silhouettes in the Shadows
By Tyrel Lohr

Into the Breach

Karandar: the world upon which the Ingalli race had arisen so many eons ago. To Ingalli Duke Jayrath Kovrosis this homecoming was bittersweet. Long had he dreamed of seeing the orb that had given his people life, but he dreaded the circumstances that had brought him to the world. The duke had never seen his ancestral home before. Karandar had been little more than memory not even a generation before, but now it was real. The reality of its existence proved less fulfilling than Kovrosis had hoped.

Duke Kovrosis sat in the command chair of a large metallic basilisk, the *Chlorenthemum*. The huge mothership flowed forward through the spatial distortion that its folding drives had initiated almost four months prior. If he was to look outside, a warped tunnel of light and shadow would be all that was visible. Within "folded space" no landscape existed. The folding of space and time were an inexact science, and one always frought with difficulty and uncertainty. Would the *Chlorenthemum* reach Karandar intact? If the navigators that plotted the jump erred in their careful calculations they could end up anywhere – or nowhere at all. Duke Kovrosis didn't know which possibility scared him more.

Within the ship's folded layers of metal sat an entire army of troops, equipment, and ships. The outer hull was lined with rings of docking ports, each of them occupied by attack sleds. The *Chlorenthemum* was a mobile battle platform, equipped for the realities of war. Very few ships of its type existed in the Instran fleet, making Duke Kovrosis' command appointment all the more prestigious.

The *Chlorenthemum's* mission was a simple one: reestablish the rule of the Casmothesine dynasty over the peoples of Karandar.

Ages ago, ancient Ingalli had found the ruins of a long dead civilization at Galathoth. Within these ruins stood a great domed temple and, within the temple, sat a blue, crystal dodecagon. The artifact's true purpose was unknown to the Ingalli until one fateful night when, at the height of the solstice, the crystal began to glow and images of unknown worlds began to appear on its various facets. The crystal was a doorway to other worlds, an instantaneous transportation device created by some unknown intelligence in the distant past. Simply by touching the smooth, cool crystal of the artifact a person could be transported to a world light years away.

The Ingalli used the device to spread to alien worlds. Explorers and adventurers traveled through the gateway in search of treasure and knowledge of other worlds. Each of the alien worlds the Ingalli visited offered ruins much like those at Galatoth. Where the ruins at Galatoth had been a full blown ancient city, the rest were simply outposts in comparison. The Ingalli erected outposts of their own on these worlds and harvested the exotic

resources they found in abundance there.

Unfortunately to all things there is an end, and the same was true for the ancient Ingalli. Wars on Karandar led to the downfall of the ruling Casmothesines that controlled the ruins of Galathoth, turning it into their capital. The colonies lost contact with their homeworld and were left to fend for themselves.

In the ensuing years, the Ingalli colony on the world of Instra became the most influential and powerful of the surviving colonies. As other colonies were abandoned due to inhospitable conditions, Instra continued to grow.

The Instrans continued to study the secrets of the mysterious crystal devices. From this research they derived many technologies that Kovrosis and other Ingalli now took for granted. For example, a tachyon communications net allowed real time communications with the other Ingalli colony worlds. But, most importantly, study of the precursor relics led to the development of the folding drive, a faster-than-light propulsion system that allowed the Ingalli to finally reach for the stars. The first application of the folding drive was on automated freighters transporting processed ore and other bulk cargo between Instra and Roklaran. Later though the devices were applied to larger space craft, culminating the creation of expansive interstellar arks like the *Chlorenthemum.*

The *Chlorenthemum's* journey was quickly drawing to a close. Soon there would be no time for Jayrath to ponder ancient history or lament about the choices he had made in his life. As with everything else in his life, his noble birth had largely decided his destiny for him. For all his title, prestige and power, Duke Jayrath Kovrosis would have

preferred a life beneath the stars instead of among them. He wondered what his wife and son were doing on Instra. They would never know his fate if he died in their campaign. True, the Instrans had faster-than-light communications, but they were limited to fixed tachyon communications hubs that required more power than a ship – even one of the size of the *Chlorenthemum* – could efficiently generate.

A bridge officer approached the Duke from the side and whispered in his ear, then retreated back to her crew station. The navigators reported that the *Chlorenthemum* was approximately thirty minutes away from transitioning back into real space. Soon the battle would be upon them.

Duke Kovrosis caught himself holding his breath and mentally rebuked himself. Anticipation of battle always unnerved him, despite his best efforts to curb such anxiety. It did not matter if it was commanding one of the old Ingalli cargo runners or leading his current charge into battle. Only thoughts of failure filled his mind, making him doubt his appointment to the command. Prestigious as it may be, the *Chlorenthemum* and her crew deserved a better commander, one that could get them through the war in one piece.

Kovrosis maintained an aura of calm nobility despite his fears. He wrestled his own personal demons too often for his liking, but he couldn't stop from thinking about them. They gnawed at him, slowly eroding his constitution until he was empty inside. The result was a hollow shell of a man, going through the motions with little emotion, psychologically disconnected from the events that surrounded him. None of the crew knew his pain, and many of them

would not have the chance. Within an hour over five thousand young Instrans would be dead. And that was a best case scenario.

As the countdown continued, nearing the halfway mark, Kovrosis assumed as much professionalism and composure as he could and ordered, "Command all crew to assume battle stations and prepare for transition into normal space." The stern intonation in his voice was cold but commanding. Immediately the crew began shouting orders into comms, distributing the order to each and every battle-capable craft nestled in and along the *Chlorenthemum's* hull. All of them would have to be ready to go the moment the *Chlorenthemum* disengaged the folding drive, in case they transitioned on top of a Karandarian fleet.

The minutes passed quickly. Oily sweat welled in Kovrosis' pores and evaporated as it hit the air. All at once the bridge's atmosphere smelled different, stale. Kovrosis could taste a distinct metallic tang on his lips, but he knew it was simply psychological. The air processing system was working fine, or he would have been informed of it.

"Transitioning to normal space," yelled one of the officers. As the words left the man's mouth the crew was overtaken by the deep sinking feeling associated with dropping out of folded space. The carefully developed Ingalli equilibrium innate to their species was instantly disrupted and all reeled an instant, severe sense of vertigo. The transition was never easy, but most could endure the experience and remain conscious. It was an important part of spacer training.

As the crew battled the effects of the transition, the *Chlorenthemum* erupted from folded space through a seemingly two-

dimension rent in space-time. Ethereal wisps shot outward from the ship's hull as it exited. The gateway closed as soon as the *Chlorenthemum* completed its jump. Another Instran mothership had joined the fray.

a dark cloud. Additionally, their eyes are covered in a thin phosphorescent chemical layer that helps to keep them moistened, the Ingalli lacking tear ducts. In conditions of low light, this chemical layer makes an Ingalli's eyes appear to glow dimly. This

Ingalli conceptions result in fraternal twins. Identical siblings are highly rare, and only occur in higher order births. Rarely an Ingalli female will give birth to either one or three children instead of two, but such pregnancies are not common.

The Wars of Unification

The return of the Instran Ingalli to their ancestral homeworld of Karandar led to an extended period of conflict with the native Karandarian Ingalli nations. Known as the War of Unification, the conflict was fought solely in the Karandar (Ingalli) star system, as the Karandarians had no knowledge of faster-than-light drive systems. The Instran Ingalli and their allies, the resource-rich Roklaran Ingalli, launched massive motherships and hundreds of consorts to Karandar during the fourteen-year war. The advanced technologies of the Instrans and Roklarans all but assured them victory over the Karandarians. Defection of several Karandarian states to the Instran side guaranteed this victory.

Excerpt from the Encyclopedia Escalatia, 2208 Edition

The Ingalli Races

Several races of Ingalli exist. The name of their species, Ingalli, was originally applied only to those members native to Instra. The subsequent Instran conquest of Karandar led to the name Ingalli being applied uniformly to all members of their species, as well as to their 'new' homeworld.

Little genetic drift exists between the Ingalli native to Karandar and those of the outer colony worlds. Lower gravity on Instra has made the Instran Ingalli slightly taller than their native brothers, and certain recessive genes have become more prevalent.

After the forced amalgamation of Karandar into the Instran/Roklaran sphere, the Instran Ingalli adopted a social policy of genetic segregation in order to "safe guard the genetic purity of their race." As such, the taller, paler Instrans are stereotypically the rulers and power brokers of the Ingalli Kingdom. The Roklarans on the other hand fully embraced the inclusion of the Karandarians and intermarriage is common.

Ingalli Physiology

The Ingalli are a largely humanoid species of average weight and height. The largest physical distinction is the Ingalli's elongated ears that extend from the base of the jaw-line to the back of the skull. The Ingalli ear structure allows for extremely acute hearing. In fact, the Ingalli are capable of discerning some forms of sonar, much like a Terran bat. The Ingalli themselves only have very limited echolocation abilities as evolution did not force the adoption of such abilities as Ingalli sight is not impaired.

The Ingalli's eyes are one of their most disturbing traits. All Ingalli have large, dark blue pupils surrounded by streaks of bright yellow. The two colors blend into one another, giving the impression of bolts of lightning breaking forth from

ability would have been genetic suicide on some planets, but luckily for the Ingalli they were the supreme predatory species on their homeworld and had very little competition that would have been able to capitalize on this evolutionary quirk.

Their skin is fairly rough and leathery, betraying the arid homeworld of their birth. Skin tones range in color from a deep, orange clay to a musty olive green. The Ingalli's dark, raven colored hair is much finer than that of most humanoids and is usually left long. Mid-shoulder length hair is not uncommon in both Ingalli sexes. This of course differs by location and regional custom, but is more often than not the accepted norm.

The Ingalli are one of several known species where multiple birth pregnancies are common. Most

Folding Drive

The Ingalli study of the ancient artifacts led to the development of the folding drive, a form of faster-than-light (FTL) propulsion unique to the Ingalli. Instead of opening a portal to hyperspace, the folding drive warps space and time in such a way as to

isolate the user from real space but still be a part of it. The mass and energy of the vessel is still located in the universe of reference, but is simply unable to interact with it normally. While in this 'folded space' a vessel cannot navigate or maneuver in any way; elemental forces push the vessel along its previously charted path. Once the vessel reaches its destination, the folding drive is used to disengage the ship back into normal space.

The major drawback of folding drive technology compared to traditional hyperspace jump engines is that only the activating vessel may enter folding space. Any other ships that attempt to enter the extremely tightly formed portal are destroyed. This led to the use of extremely large starships capable of transporting lesser craft with them. Economics limited interstellar travel to those willing to pay the cost to field some gargantuan craft.

Another disadvantage of folding drives is the time factor involved. Rough travel times equate to nearly five light years traveled per week in folding space. In contrast, some weeklong hyperspace voyages can take ships thousands of light years across the galaxy.

The Instrans and Roklarans made heavy use of folding drive during their early interstellar days. Large cargo barges transported raw materials from Roklaran to Instra for refining which comprised a majority of the interplanetary trade at that point in history.

Ingalli Technology

The early Instrans made heavy use of light lasers, railguns, and burst particle weapons. Most of these weapons were based on relics found strewn among the ruins of their worlds of origin. Of the Ingalli colonies, Instra enjoyed the greatest technological skill. Roklaran, on the other hand, maintained the strongest industrial base, due in large part to their immense mineral wealth.

The Karandarians had developed along a decidedly different technical path due to the total loss of the ancient ruins at Galathoth over the centuries of war. Their ships relied more heavily on weak raking particle weapons, called proton beams. These proton beams brought with them large internal volume requirements, limiting their effective deployment in the Karandarian fleets. The lack of technological superiority over the invading Ingalli proved the downfall of the nations of Karandar.

Ingalli Sensors

Due to the technology level of the combatants, all ships that fought in the Wars of Unification were limited to Antiquated Sensors. After the war, the Instrans developed the more advanced sensors used by most other races and implemented them on their next generation of starships.
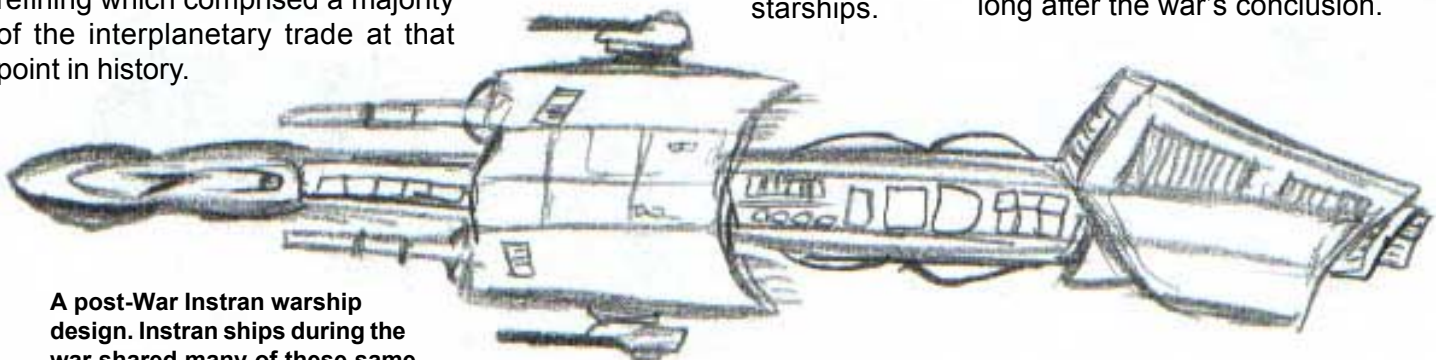
Instran Starships

Instra Warcruiser

Named for the Instran homeworld, the Instra Warcruiser was the largest cruiser fielded by the Instran Imperial Naval Arm. A heavy combat vessel, the Instra Warcruiser was armed with no less than four full railgun mounts. This provided the Instra with more than enough firepower to destroy most enemy starships. A strong point defense armament also helped to protect the ship from enemy fighter threats.

During the war, the Instrans upgraded their war cruiser with whatever new technologies became available. The most notable upgrade came during the middle of the war when improved laser cannon designs were developed. The addition of stronger, long-range lasers greatly improved the Instra's fighting abilities.

Kinchen Attack Frigate

These small attack boats were the primary warships of the Instran naval forces during the war. Kinchen Attack Frigates could be transported in large numbers by the large Aleostre Motherships within its mammoth hangar bays. The Kinchens were extremely successful multi-role combat ships and remained in service as police units long after the war's conclusion.

A post-War Instran warship design. Instran ships during the war shared many of these same design aesthetics.

Nalireth Missile Cruiser

A variant of the Instra, the Nalireth Missile Cruiser was developed during the war as a means by which to exploit weaknesses in certain enemy fleets, namely a vulnerability to massed ballistic missile fire. The Nalireth was only a middling success, however, and the Instran Imperial Naval Arm did not commit to the construction of very many of the class.

Unlike the base Instra hull, the Nalireth Missile Cruisers did not survive the end of the war. All were summarily scrapped after the conquest of Karandar.

Osacha Gunship

Often referred to as a 'laser gunship', the Osacha Gunship was one of the most overgunned ships in the Instran fleet. Armed with five laser cannons, a considerable feat, the Osacha was designed specifically for taking out enemy capital ships. The original intent of the Osacha was as a counter to the structure-heavy Roklaran starships should Instra and Roklaran ever find themselves at each other's throats. The gunship's concentrated laser firepower was formidable, and groups of Osacha Gunships successfully combated enemy bulk cruisers during the war.

For the Next Great Machine

I had originally planned on having all of the units ready for this month's issue of The Great Machine, but real life interfered with me getting it all done. Next issue look for the appearance of Karandarian and Roklaran units to finish out the Wars of Unification Ingalli fleets.

* * *

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If interested, contact 1-888-IAM-EVIL with offers."

Robotech Returns With New Ships for the Terrans and Zentraedi
By Paul Brown

The Rain of Death

The hatch exploded outwards, hitting the hard earth and tumbling end over end for several metres. Ritaro grabbed the still-hot outer hull of his craft, and pulled himself head first through the opening, his several-ton mass falling to the earth with a thump.

His fighter was buried nose first in the now-desolate wasteland of earth. The area he had crashed in was no doubt doused with large levels of radiation from the use of Reflex Cannons by the Grand Fleet, the same which fleet which even now was burning in the atmosphere as untold numbers of ships and fighters made their descent towards the planet.

Though the pain caused by the large amount of shrapnel in his side, Ritaro pulled himself upright and lend against the hull of his fighter. His transmitter was destroyed, what survivors there were on either side of the conflict would not be coming to his rescue, he would die here, alone in a wasteland which served as a testament to the Zentraedi's former power.

Only a year ago, Ritaro had been launching one of the first attacks on the planet, leading his renowned fighter wing into the atmosphere to provide cover over the assault on Zor's battlefortress. But as time went on, rumours of the micronian way of life began to filter back into the fleet. Rumours of a life with more things than war, a life with music and with intermingling of the sexes. After news spread through the Imperial Fleet, commanded by Lord Breetai, supreme commander Dolza ordered the extermination of the renegade Zentraedi. Ritaro, like so many of his comrades ended up fighting alongside the very micronians they had tried to exterminate.

And now, he had paid for his disloyalty with his life. But in the hopelessness of the moment, he found peace and tranquillity as he grasped out his tiny doll of the Micronian Minmei, and it began to sing.

As he felt life slipping away, he started to believe that despite the fact he would die, perhaps he wouldn't die alone. Only a few hours ago, Minmei's voice had led them into battle. And now, through the simple circuitry of the little red doll, she would accompany Ritaro to his death.

What Has Happened

As with previous months I haven't quite achieved the goal which I had set out for. Despite this, the Robotech feature of this month's Great Machine was quite extensive with many Zentraedi and RDF ships.

One thing that delayed me was the fact I had to rework several of weapon's systems in terms of damage. The main beams found on Zentraedi ships were quite powerful, but when I started work on the SDF-1 I found that its guns would simply be ludicrous and that furthermore, several of the weapons on other ships were pretty much the same way. So an overall reworking of the Diem and Nabrilla beams was instituted. Though the destroyers are not feature in this issue, look to the end of the article for the website address where you can find these ships and more.

Giant Crew

This characteristic found on every Zentraedi ship under the *Special Rules* box denotes a new type of crew previously unseen in Babylon 5 Wars, giants. The crew is so much larger in mass than the typical human body that they receive special rules. For the most part, a giant crew will have no effect on space combat. Only when the two species meet face to face, will the true consequences come into effect. This situation is of course ship and space facility attacks by breaching pods carrying zero-g trained marines. In such situations, the following rules will apply:

Ships with *Giant Crews* may only board other ships with *Giant Crews,* and may **never** board ships without *Giant Crews* because of course the hallways will be too small for them. In such situations, **normal marine boarding** applies with standard scenario and racial bonuses. A ship without *Giant Crew* can always board such vessels, but they are subject to the following changes to the marine missions:

Delivering the Marines: Giant Crew will always get a +2 bonus to defend against Marine boarding actions. All scenario and racial specific bonuses are ignored because at that size, they simply will not matter. Though the –2 penalty for attaching to a destroyed section will still apply.

Sabotaging a System: The assaulting normal-sized marines gain a –2 bonus to perform this mission. This represents the problems the giant crew will have in finding comparatively small marines once they have made their way into the ship at large.

Wreaking Havoc: As with the previous mission, a –2 bonus applies for the normal-sized troops for the same reason. And as with the previous mission, a roll of 6-8 can reduce and eliminate this bonus over successive failed rolls.

Rescuing a Captive: The attacking marines will gain a –2 bonus for this mission as well, unless both parties agree that the target would be guarded such as VIP prisoners. In which case, the bonus should be eliminated.

Deactivating a Satellite: no changes

Capturing a Ship: Due to the size, mass and inherent strength of giant crew it is far harder to capture such a ship than any normal vessel. Weapons designed to kill crew and reduce structural damage within a ship are often unable to cause fatal wounds to Giant Crew members. As such, when calculating the crew factor, *Giant Crew* ships are calculated at a rate of 1 per 10 ramming factor.

Special Rule: Because the Zentraedi crew are all soldiers, their crew factor is calculated at a rate of 1 per 5 ramming factor. This represents the ship at a maximum state of readiness with most of the crew out of stasis. A ship unprepared for combat may be given another crew factor rate decided upon by the players or scenario designer.

Reflex Cannon

These weapons represent the pinnacle of the Robotech Master's weapons development. With the political and battlefield impact of a large nuclear weapon, they were closely guarded by the Masters to ensure they were all under their control. As such, they only saw deployment in the border fleets or onboard the defensive Zentraedi units.

The game statistics used for the Reflex Cannons are far below their onscreen capabilities. Reflex Cannons are generally said to destroy any ship in one blast, and usually have enough power on the
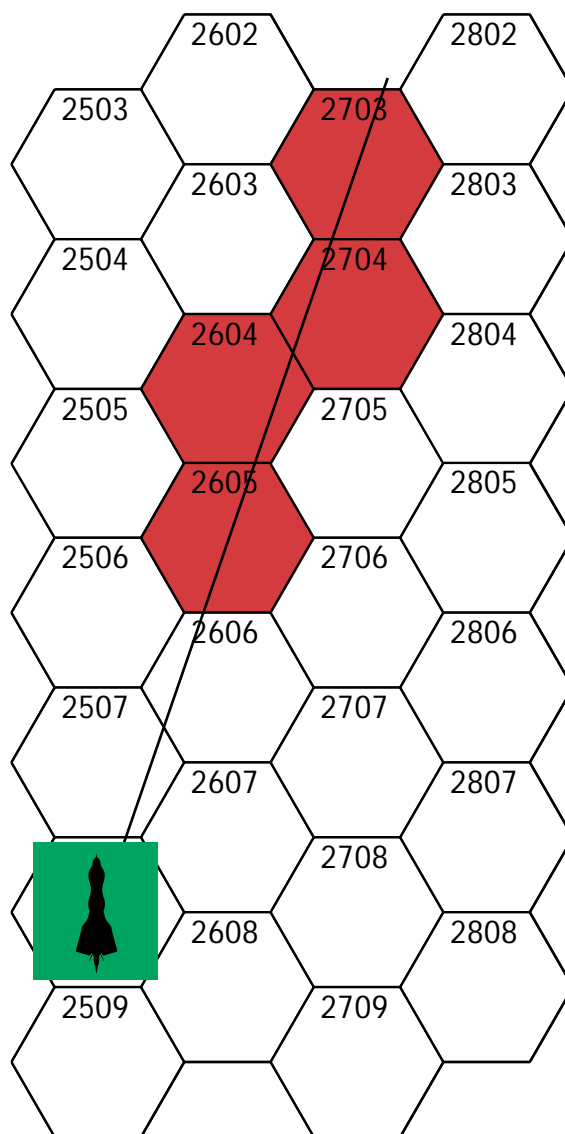
edge of the beam to destroy any ships therein as well. In addition, such power came with long recharge times of several minutes. Which meant that any B5Wars application would be a once per scenario shot with unlimited power, hardly a balanced weapon.

In order to make them more playable, the power of the Reflex Cannon has been reduced to a more manageable level (though some would argue that it is still unbalanced). In addition, the recharge time is also similar reduced to make it playable. Though seemingly against the flavour of the weapon, the damage and recharge is plausible as most weapons are said to be able to fire at different energy levels (with reflective damage values). The statistics within the Reflex Cannon would simply be a low level, high rate of fire damage level that could be plausible in high rich environments. And though its power has been decreased, it can still easily destroy many smaller ships in one salvo.

Reflex Cannons must be 'deployed' before firing. This represents that prior to firing the hull of the ship, or more accurately the two booms of the weapon, must separate. Deployment takes one turn and the cannon may be left in deployed mode for the rest of the scenario. Reflex Cannons can generally fire in two separate modes of damage:

Concentrated Blast: The weapon is targeted against a single ship and inflicts flash damage to units within the same hex. Excess damage left over after destroying the vessel may be transferred to other

Reflex Cannon in Area Effect Mode

units in the same way as a Kirishiac Hypergraviton Blaster.

Dispersed Blast: The weapon is fired with a much less focused beam, causing far less damage but to many more units. A line of fire is chosen at the time of firing and a start hex is designated. Depending on the weapon, several hexes along that line will be hit by the weapon under the rules for proximity weapons. The diagram on the same page shows a Makral Yver 474 Reflex Cannon firing in dispersed mode.

Zentraedi Reinforcements

Nupetiet Vergnitzs Flagship

The Nupetiet Vergnitzs class is the largest warship in the Zentraedi navy. Over four kilometres long, the ship is heavily armoured and bristling with particle cannons and heavy missile turrets. In a massive central hangar, the ship carriers over two hundred combat and support craft, which by a large number of exit points can be launched quickly and effectively. It's perhaps greatest armament however, is its command and control capabilities, which can co-ordinate large numbers of Zentraedi ships into battle. As the flagship of most Zentraedi fleets, it is also equipped with the ability to take control of the computers of friendly combat craft, should they be not responding to orders. As a command ship, it also holds great stores of cargo to help supply those ships under its command. In particular, the ship often services Tou Redir Frigates which have inadequate stores for extended operations.

Note: As with the multi-reactor Freespace ships, the Nupetiet is not destroyed when one of its reactors is lost. Rather, refer to the "Reactor Totals" chart and apply a power shortage as appropriate. Only when all three reactors are destroyed is the ship also destroyed.

Queadol Magdomilla Command Cruiser

The Queadol is an unusual ship within the Zentraedi navy, in that it is able to separate into two

Redundant Sensors

Redundant Sensors is a new term for an old idea. When a ship has redundant sensors it means that the multiple sensor arrays in use are performing the same function, rather than complimenting one another. In such a case, the player of the ship in question should not add the sensor array values together but rather only use the highest value. If two or more sensor arrays are tied for the highest value, the net value is increased by one for each additional sensor. This idea was one I used on the Exile Cruiser featured in a Babcom magazine, and the more recent, joined Sanchin Vessels.

independent units. Intended to act as a command ship to smaller task forces, the Queadol in fact has two distinct uses. The main body of the vessel harbours the advanced command and control facilities, and is intended to stay largely in space. As such, its hangars are equipped primarily with Aerospace fighter craft like the Gnerl.

The bow of the ship instead, is designed as an assault vessel used to deliver troops to planetary or space-based facilities. As such, it is equipped with the heaviest armour in the Zentraedi fleet and utilises

infantry mecha rather than aerospace craft. The bow is also designed to give the craft great flexibility on the battlefield, however it is subject to one inherent flaw. The reactors onboard the bow of the ship are unable to power its four massive beam cannons, and must instead rely on the main ship's reactors. When separated, the bow is left with a large power shortage while the main craft gains a power surplus. The net effect is less than efficient.

Because of the higher risk to the bow ship, these vessels were produced in great numbers than the main craft. Depending on the frequency, and type of combat a Queadol could be joined to multiple different bow ships in its lifetime.

Quiltra Queleual Landing Ship

Designed by the Robotech Masters as a Zentraedi Troop Transport, humans regard the Quiltra more as a heavy carrier. Bearing more combat craft than most of the Zentraedi fleet, the Quiltra can deliver a lot of firepower onto the field despite its substandard weapons suite. The ship also holds large amounts of cargo, which is utilised either in a fleet support role, supplying other ships or as space for additional combat troops. For the latter, the ship was designed to attack hostile planets by entering the atmosphere and landing before delivering its combat troops. To this end, the ship is heavily armoured and equipped with a unique thruster configuration

which has the acceleration and braking thrusters all mounted at the rear so as to survive the damage that will be suffered by the forward section during the initial assault. Once landed, the ship can deploy its compliment of troops as well as reserves carried within the cargo bays.

Rineunadou Lojmeuean Monitor

The Zentraedi monitor is one of the smallest and yet most feared ships in the entire fleet. Equipped with a powerful Reflex Cannon, a fleet of monitors can quickly lay a planet or enemy force to waste. Fired at its highest setting, the Reflex cannon will destroy any ship in its path and be coupled with a recharge time of several minutes.

Because of destructive force both on the battlefield and in the political stage, the Robotech Masters only equipped Zentraedi monitors with Reflex Cannons so as to keep their potential close to home and firmly under their control.

Note: For the purpose of playability the Reflex Cannon has been given a lower damage value and an increased firing rate. In a target-rich environment, such a use of the Reflex Cannon would not be out of the question. As it is stated that Cannon can fire at multiple recharge times and with equivalent amounts of damage. The Reflex Cannon must also be 'deployed' before firing. This represents the separating of the two booms which form the cannon, and requires one full turn. Once deployed, the cannon may then fire but is also subject to increased damage because of less-armoured parts of the ship being now exposed, this is represented by two

armour values and two hit locations on the location chart. The Reflex Cannon requires both booms to be intact in order to function.

Zentraedi Light Combat Craft

The Zentraedi operate a number of effective, yet smaller combat craft, most of which fall into the LCV category. For purposes of continuity and simplicity, I have chosen to designate these craft as taking up only three hangar boxes as *originally* decided upon by Demiurge of Dune Crossover fame. The LCVs, subsequently also require three 'launch spots' when being deployed. Such that, a hangar with launch capacity six could launch one flight of fighters, or two LCVs.

Frandlar Tiluvo Dropship

With the Regult Battlepod as the primary troop of the Zentraedi forces, the fleet required a means to deliver these troops to planetary targets. The Regult is of course unable to fly within an atmosphere. To this end, a small dropship was used to transport large numbers of troops down to planet and deposit them for combat. All ships in the Zentraedi navy bearing large numbers of Regults are equipped with a sufficient number of Tiluvos for the task.

Note: Despite being equipped with a 25 box hangar, the Frandlar Tiluvo should not be regarded as a light carrier. The ship CANNOT maintain, repair or supply the fighters for ANY length of time. It only has enough space to transport them to their target, or deploy them

beforehand if necessary. Also note that the ship can ignore typical LCV EW restrictions, this was done because the craft has NO weapons and thus would never use anything other than DEW.

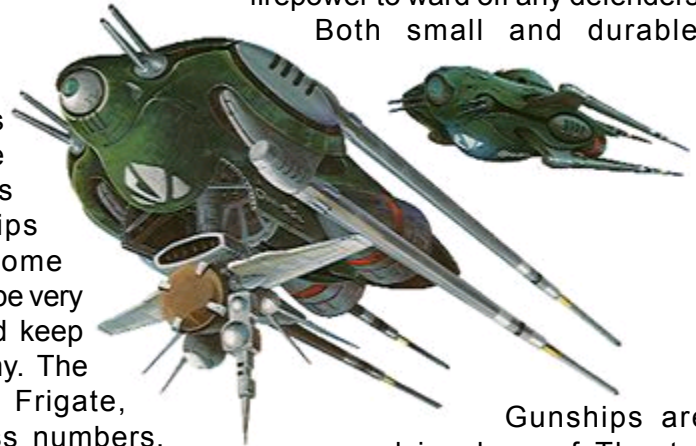## Quel Quallie Threatre Scout

Space is vast, and despite the enormous numbers of ships involved in some conflicts, it can still be very difficult to find and keep track of the enemy. The Tou Redir Scout Frigate, produced in mass numbers, was the first step taken to address this issue. The Quel Quallie is the next step. Deployed by almost every Zentraedi ship in the fleet, a Theatre Scout can extend the sensory range of allied vessels dramatically. Even the Tou Redir carries one of these vessels to help during its deployments.

Another advantage is that the Quel Quallie is relatively small, allowing it to infiltrate enemy perimeters with greater ease. The craft employs average armour and a relatively strong weapon suite, with several beam cannons and a small payload of anti-fighter and anti-ship missiles.

Szur Gunship

Designed to compliment the firepower of Zentraedi warships, the Quilrella Szur Gunship employs a heavy, though short-ranged, beam cannon for anti-ship duties. A secondary turret provides anti-fighter firepower to ward off any defenders.
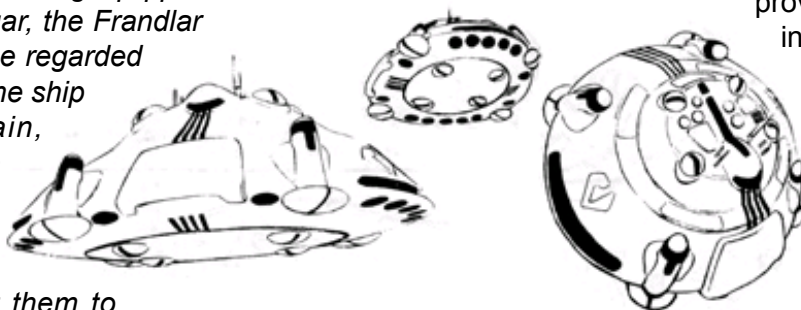
Both small and durable, Gunships are swapped in place of Theatre Scouts and dropships prior to fleet operations. During the attempted capture of the SDF-1, Breetai's fleet did not employ any Gunships as they would be unsuited for the task.

Robotech Defense Forces

The following is a sneak peek into the Robotech Defense Forces. For those unfamiliar with Robotech, more information will be featured in the next Great Machine including some of the history leading up to the First Robotech War. For now, I've provided a few of the Earth units involved in the conflict. For the most part, these represent the lesser ships and fighter craft of the RDF fleet. Their flagship and all of the necessary rules will appear at a later date.

Europa Sublight Destroyer

Originally dubbed the Armored Missile Escort Ship, the Europa was the first space warship launched by Earth in 2007. The design bureau at the time, having analysed the SDF-1, determined that any alien force would likely consist of one large warship supported by several smaller craft. Designed to operate in union with the SDF-1, the Europa would support the flagship and provide much needed anti-ship firepower. While the plan was sound, it was fundamentally flawed because the bureau assumed any alien flagship would be equivalent to the SDF-1. In reality, when the Zentraedi arrived the majority of the fleet was larger than the Macross and appeared in far superior numbers. Though a powerful design, the Europa was outmatched by even the smallest of Zentraedi warships and vastly outnumbered. Most of the twenty Europa class destroyers were destroyed in the initial contact with the Zentraedi, or later during Dolza's attack and the subsequent holocaust.

Note: The Europa SCS, is equipped with Particle Blasters, Cannons and Class-S Racks. For flavour's sake, the weapons are renamed and modified in a few categories such as power requirements and firecontrol.

Though slightly different from their original, I have chosen to use them for simplicities' sake and a decreased learning curve for the player. When any easily recognisable icon is used, the player can assume that it's more/less the same weapon but should also be aware of any minor discrepancies.

Hermes Sublight Carrier

The sublight carrier was designed to serve as the core of the Robotech Defense Fleet. Escorted by Europa Destroyers, these ships would engage enemy battle fortresses, disabling their main cannon so the SDF-1 could finish them with its much heavier armament. Though each of these ships had their own names, they tended to be referred to as Armors, along with their placement in construction, such as Armour-2. This originated from the ship's first designation of Armored Reflex Missile Defender.

The ship is equipped with a diverse mix of weaponry, the core of which is five powerful beam cannons based upon the Macross' twin turrets. These weapons however, were ultimately inferior and with inadequate reactor power they were laden with a long recharge time. Secondary armament consists of weapons based on both earth

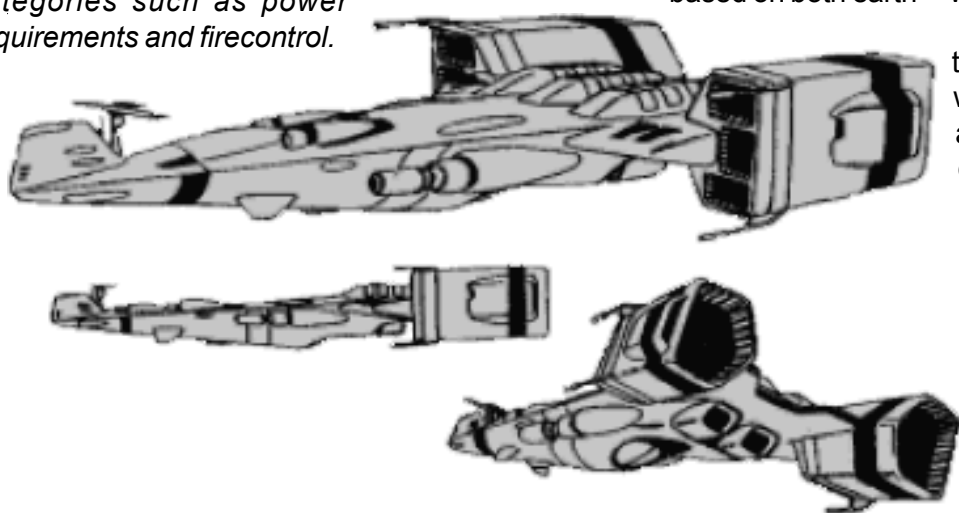arsenals and weapons found in the Alien derelict.

As its name suggests, the ship's main armament is several wings of one-man fighters. Originally the compliment consisted of Ghosts and Lancer-IIs, but the ships were later equipped with Veritechs. Its greatest capability is the ability to join up with the SDF-1 and compliment its firepower. Though such a manoeuvre was never performed in combat, with several naval-based resources eventually taking their place as the SDF-1's arms.

Like the Europa Destroyer, though a solid design, the A.R.M.D. platforms were no match for the Zentraedi fleet. With weak structural integrity and poor manoeuvring capabilities, most were destroyed during the initial encounter or the final attack against Earth by the Grand Fleet.

Lancer II Space Fighter

The Lancer II was the RDF's first real space fighter, following in the wake of the short-lived Hunter program. The hull of fighter consists of three main sections, the engine, the cockpit and the main guns. Launched from the A.R.M.D. platforms and the SDF-1, the Lancer II was designed to engage enemy fighters at range with the main cannon and to mop up any survivors with a small payload of missiles.

The main cannon fires self-tracking shells with plasma warheads held in containment. With a relatively long range, they are very effective against enemy fighters and have a fairly large payload.

While the Lancer proved initially successful in trials, against the Zentraedi it was quickly overwhelmed by large numbers of enemy mecha. This problem, coupled with poor turning ability, inability to transform and the overall

fragility of the frame left the Lancer to fall into disfavour. Though after the holocaust, it continued to serve on the remaining A.R.M.D. platforms until it was replaced by the Alpha Fighter.

Ghost Drone Fighter

The Ghost originally made its debut as an atmospheric fighter before the formation of the United Earth Government. As later versions earned the favour of the RDF, the program blossomed to include a trans-atmospheric version which would end up being fielded primarily by the A.R.M.D. platforms.

When actual combat came to Earth, the Ghost proved less than outstanding. The Drone's control and combat programs were substandard. Even so, the Ghost

continued to be used in later months, primarily because human pilots preferred having the drones getting shot at instead of them.

Like the Lancer, the Ghost was phased out soon after the destruction of the cataclysmic battle with Dolza's Grand Fleet.

Additional Craft and Next Month's Great Machine

The Zentraedi also deploy several small craft not mentioned here. Among them are shuttles, both armed and unarmed, as well as such vessels as assault ships and refueling craft. They can all be found on the website set up for the

Robotech conversions, at **http://knossos.firenebula.com**

As many of you can see, I was unable to finish the SDF-1 for this publication of the Great Machine. Though I have certainly started on the ship, its so complex that it will need to be approached with a great deal of planning so as to avoid having a messy SCS. I also hope to have some other ships for your enjoyment as well.

* * *

The Modrani

The Last Notes:
Final Ships for
Rob Seldon's Modrani
By Paul Brown

This month's Great Machine includes the last of the Modrani ships based on the notes of Rob Seldon. Where will the future take this interesting new race? Only time will tell.

Also included in this batch of starships is the Trassik Corvette Leader, created based on a submission by Katoc from the b5wars.net forums.

Jaggari Battleship

A symbol of pride for the Modrani people, the Jagarri is the largest space-going warship currently in service. For a long period of time the Modrani never fielded a battleship-type vessel in significant numbers. The problem was that a battleship with its lack of manoeuvrability and dependency on high armour did not fit into the Modrani military doctrine. Finally, near the end of the twenty-second century the Modrani were able to design a ship with both the manoeuvrability and shielding to suit their needs.

Equipped with the strongest shields in the fleet, the Jagarri employs a primarily laser armament to combat enemy ships with a combination of Laser Pikes and Blast Lasers. Tachyon Pulsers and Torpedoes compliment the primary firepower and provide close in defence. With reinforced structure, a high compliment of fighters and advanced sensors the Jagarri is a forced to be reckoned with. Its main weakness is a dependency on structurally weak thruster arrays which can be quickly disabled by enemy fire.

The Jagarri is deployed in numbers proportionally larger than most battleships in use by other races. However, the ship also tends to be held in reserve and is rarely used in the cross-border peacetime actions that the Modrani fleet participates in.

Vorsaala Scout Cruiser
Vorissi Variant (Uncommon)

Originally the Modrani employed a dedicated scout platform, but over time the navy as a whole began shifting towards flexible hulls which can also be easily configured for differing tasks during the construction period. The Vorsaala is based upon the Vorissi warship and utilises nearly seventy percent of the same construction plan as its predecessor. Where it differs is the inclusion of a high-grade sensor array, and the omission of several primary weapon systems.

The sensor system is a more compact version of the array found in the Detekki Survey vessel, with tweaking to the programming to streamline it for military applications. The Vorsaala is deployed in all major fleets, providing early warning systems and combat applications. It is also frequently seen in the border patrol fleets along side Vorissis to discover any unwarranted entries by outside parties.

Detekki Survey Ship
Dekkari Variant (Rare)

The Detekki is the Modrani equivalent of the Earth Alliance Explorer. Modified from the Dekkarri Fleet Carrier, most of the original ship's fighter capacity has been replaced with cargo holds and quarters for the survey team. An advanced sensor array is used to help scout out unexplored systems and to discover suitable jump beacon routes in hyperspace.

Rather than employing scientific shuttles, the Detekki relies on the common Asalti Military Dropships to conduct planet-side exploration and analysis. The onboard holds, typically used for military hardware by marines can be just as useful for carrying scientific instruments. The craft's inherent weapon systems can be useful when the mission yields unexpected dangers.

On occasion, the Detekki is used in a military fashion to scout out enemy strongholds, and other objectives. In this situations, special

ops teams would replaced the survey crew and the Asalti Dropships already onboard would prove their worth as scout insertion-transports.

Trassik Corvette Leader
Trakkis Variant (Rare)

In the years prior to the deployment of the Vorissi Patrol Cruiser, Modrani naval development was looking to field-test the new Tachyon Streamer. The Trakkis Corvette, a mainstay of Modrani forces for several decades was beginning to show its age. Naval Command saw it as a perfect opportunity to both test the new weapon system and potential breath new life into an older design.

The installation of the Tachyon Streamer did not go as smoothly as anticipated. The extra room required for the larger weapon coupled with the broader than standard weapon arc on the Trakkis led to both delays and the removal of several layers of armour over the emplacement. The resulting configuration proved successful on the battlefield, most often used as a pack leader for other Corvettes. Typically these packs would consist of three ships with one Trassik as the leader.

In larger fleet engagements, captains still tended to prefer the original craft as it was able to deliver a higher volume of fire. While in smaller skirmishes with infrequent targets, the Trassik remains in high standing.

* * *

SHOWDOWNS-11
Empire, Allies, and Servants

by

Steve Cross
Renaud Gagne

Showdowns-11 is finally available! Tyrel finally managed to get the PDF version finished!

The shock! The horror!

Download it today at:

planetside.firenebula.com/ supplements/

Graham Short Shows Us Why It's Not Easy Being Green

By Graham Short and Tyrel Lohr

The original Gorn designs are good examples of the offensive style of design favoured by the fleet engaged along the Romulan border. They have the good all around firepower required to engage the sneaky Romulans when they emerge from their cloaks, relying on being able to deliver a good volley in return without regard for defensive fire. A large portion of the fleet is designed and built for this role.

The rest of the fleet has to fulfill a wide variety of roles, usually against less aggressive foes. Therefore these ships are designed with some defensive firepower to help negate some of the potential damage and place a greater emphasis on forward firepower.

When a hull design is popular with captains it is often kept in service longer than its technology would normally dictate. The hulls can be downgraded and refitted with older weapons to keep them in service. In that way a destroyer hull can be decommissioned, then recommissioned as a frigate with a different weapons fit. It is unusual for the sensor fit to be changed at this time.

There are not a lot of internal security problems within Gorn controlled space and so there has not been a need to build a separate fleet of police ships. The gunboats are widely used to fill that role.

Gorn Starships

Chokarr Carrier
Tura'Khur Variant (Common)

The Chokarr Carrier was commissioned as a throwaway carrier unit to assist in Gorn power

projection along their new border with the United Federation of Planets. After encountering the Federation, the Gorn found themselves having to tighten security along a previously lax border of their empire. The Gorn saw carriers as the most cost-effective form of power projection available to them at the time.

Chokarr Carriers sacrifice the armament of the older Tura'Khur in favor of two forward hangar bays, each capable of holding two flights of fighters. No attempt was made to improve the ship's aging shield system as the carriers and their pilots were seen as wholly expendable in the name of defending the Confederacy from outside attack.

Lekar Destroyer
Base Hull (Unlimited Deployment)

The Lekar was an older Gorn destroyer design that saw its heyday in the Gorn/Romulan War. The sturdy destroyer design was originally equipped with a diversified

arsenal of plasma weapons, including a plasma shotgun.

The Lekar was eventually superceded by other destroyer classes and remained a second-line ship until a string of upgrades, beginning in 2275, updated the hull with particle driver technology. These refits reduced the Lekar's overall firepower, but improved its escort capabilities.

Mpora Escort
Base Hull (Unlimited Deployment)

This small escort hull was developed during the Gorn/Romulan War as a means to counter Romulan cruisers. Armed with two plasma shotguns, the Mpora Escort is capable of ripping through shields and armor at close range, crippling or destroying most Romulan ships of the period with ease.

Tura'Khur Cruiser
Base Hull (Unlimited Deployment)

The Tura'Khur Cruiser was the primary cruiser unit during the Gorn/Romulan War. The Tura'Khurs were weaker than the Romulan's own Dhael'tagor ("Condor") Dreadnoughts, the Tura'Khurs compensated by being easier to build and being overgunned. Six medium plasma cannons and one plasma shotgun ensured that, at close range, a Tura'Khur could down even a Romulan dreadnought.

Even after the Tura'Khur Cruiser had been replaced by other more advanced units, the basic spaceframe was kept in service due to the economy of the design.

Several variants exist of the Tura'Khur, and many survived into the 24th Century.

Vrrka Assault Carrier
Bhrataar Variant (Common)

The Vrrka Assault Carrier is a common modification of the venerable Gorn battleship of the BH2 type. During the late 2250s, tensions along the Gorn/Romulan border prompted the Gorn to convert several Vrrka Assault Carriers for duty. Unlike most enemy assault ships, the Gorn assault carrier relies heavily on its twelve assault shuttles to aid in the deployment of troops to a planetary target. The ship is also capable of beaming troops to ground targets, but does not have any specialized transporter systems to aid in this regard.

The armament of the Vrrka is considerably weaker than that of the Bhrataar Battleship. These craft were never meant for direct combat, but instead to move in once the battle in space was largely won.

Gorn Fighters

The Gorn are one of the few Alpha Quadrant powers to make heavy use of fighter craft in their fleet doctrine. Although they field few true carrier designs, the Gorn have traditionally maintained a large enough carrier force to allow for limited deployment of fighters in most border engagements if they feel it is necessary.

Davga Light Fighter
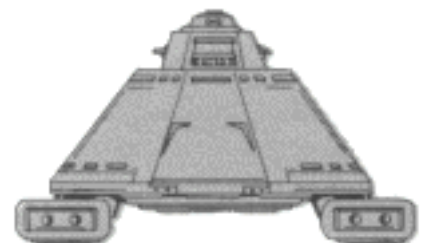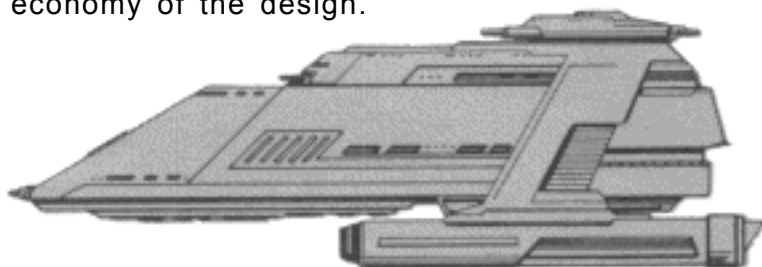### Base Hull (Unlimited Deployment)

The small Davga Light Fighter is an attrition fighter designed as a pure anti-shipping unit. Armed with a single paired particle gun, the Davga can do major damage to even the most well armored starship. However, its lack of a free thrust limits its utility as a heavy interceptor design. Luckily the fighter has an extremely small signature, making hitting the fighter very difficult indeed.

G'v'arr Medium Fighter
Base Hull (Unlimited Deployment)

This advanced medium fighter is a supplement to the smaller Davga. The G'v'arr is optimized for interceptor duty with two ultralight particle drivers giving it suitable firepower to destroy most enemy fighters and shuttles. The fighter also has improved forward and side shielding, allowing it to jump headlong into the fray with greater chance of survival.

* * *

The Gorn: SFB to B5W
By Dale McKee

A Conversion of one of Star Fleet Battle's Veteran Races to B5W
By Dale McKee

I started out as an SFB player in wargaming, and got involved in B5W a few years ago. Naturally, I was quite interested in Tyrel's Trek conversions when I found them. I thought they were very well done; my only 'disappointment' was that he used the FASA Gorn instead of the SFB versions.

Don't get me wrong, I enjoyed FASA's Star Trek Combat Simulator, and love Tyrel's conversions of those ships; it's just that I always liked the Gorn designs from Star Fleet Battles better (they are my favored race in SFB).

So I set out to do a conversion of my own of those designs, utilizing Tyrel's rules. I started with the Gorn Light Cruiser from SFB and whipped out my own version, then sent it to Tyrel for feedback.

It quickly became apparent that I'd gone about things in a different manner, though. Tyrel replied that while the Gorn CL I'd done was a good 'literal' conversion from SFB, it didn't mesh with the history and feel for the Gorns in his

own designs. From there, we went back and forth with a few ideas and, with his help, I came up with a more suitable conversion.

Originally, I'd tried to translate each weapon over directly, including the use of medium phasers to replace the phaser-1s the SFB ships were armed with. But Tyrel's Gorn don't use phasers, and even though (in SFB) *every* race uses phasers, we wanted a different flavor here.

As a design consideration, I started by looking at the Federation ship that I felt should roughly match up to the Gorn unit in question. This time my first ship conversion was the venerable Gorn Heavy Cruiser, matched up against the Federation Constitution-class. After some discussion, Tyrel came up with an 'early' particle weapon to replace the phaser-1s (since the Particle Driver would not be available yet). I did up an icon and hence the Particle Pummel was born.

In the 'early' Gorn ships, I roughly replaced each phaser-1 with a Particle Pummel sharing as close to the same arc as I could approximate. While this gave it more weaponry than the Fed designs, these weapons weren't individually as powerful, and so I felt it added up. I replaced the Plasma Torpedoes from SFB with various 'Tyrel Gorn' weaponry, as follows: Each Plasma-G was replaced by a Light Plasma

Mortar; each Plasma-S was replaced by a Plasma Shotgun; and each Plasma-R (rare in Gorn service) was replaced by a Plasma Mortar.

For the Plasma-F, I used the Plasma Blaster, also incorporating the wing phaser-3s into that weapon. With the advent of the Plasma Carronade option for F-launcers in SFB, I felt this was a good match.

Shield strength I gauged primarily by the comparable Fed ship, since the Gorn have durable ships in SFB that match up well to Federation designs. However, I also made the Gorn ships less maneuverable than their Fed counterparts… Gorn ships in SFB are barges when it comes to maneuver!

When converting the weapons arcs, I tried to stay as true to SFB Gorn doctrine as possible. In SFB, especially in the early Gorn ships (CA, CL, DD), the Gorns have terrific all-around firepower, but don't concentrate it in any one arc well, except down the centerline. Due to slow-arming plasma weapons in the wings and poor maneuverability, they tend to make 'strafing runs' and fire alternating 'broadsides'. This is reflected in the arcs with my conversion.

When converting the Gorn "HCVs", I found that putting all of their weapons in the front left them far too

vulnerable to having the nose blown off by photons on the way into plasma range. Hence I used a Drazi-style hull configuration, which should make their weaponry more survivable.

I will note that, in keeping with the spirit of the SFB Gorn ships (which usually swap out two Shuttles for Assault Shuttles), I recommend buying the maximum amount of Breaching Pods on each ship. As soon as I get around to designing one, that is.

Lastly, with the 'later war-era' ships, I beefed up the structure armor.

Without further ado, here are some notes on the actual ships I have converted so far.

CA Heavy Cruiser

This ship was meant to be a fair match-up to the Federation Constitution-class. It is less maneuverable, but has equal shielding. Sporting 8 Particle Pummels and two Light Plasma Mortars, it's capable of delivering a solid hit. At close range, the mortars will do significant damage, but even at longer ranges they remain accurate. Designed to fire a broadside of two Pummels and a Mortar, then angle around and fire another broadside on a later turn, the CA can only bring a solid blow down the centerline.

CL Light Cruiser

The Gorn CL is an oddball ship in SFB. It has the same 'heavy weapon' firepower as the CA, but half the beam weaponry and weaker shields. It also doesn't survive damage very well. It is, however, more maneuverable. I matched the CL up against the Fed Larson-class. This ship is designed to fly much like the CA (just not as well).

DD Destroyer

In SFB, the Gorn DD is an early ship that any other race would class as a Frigate. For its day, it is a light ship; later it becomes quite weak. While this ship is more maneuverable than the CL, it is an eggshell. In early years, use them in packs of three; in later years, they are replaced by the Gorn BDD Battle Destroyer, a much better ship.

SC Scout

A puny scout, it is nonetheless the first ELINT unit available to the SFB Gorn. An Uncommon DD variant, it is more useful as a campaign element than as a fleet ELINT unit. It trades out the Light Plasma Mortar on the DD for slightly improved sensors and ELINT ability. Note that, with its extra power, if it shuts off two Pummels, it can boost its sensors to 7.

BDD Battle Destroyer

Essentially a war-era refit of the DD, the BDD adds a second bubble to the aft hull. While still a medium ship, it has more structure, better sensors, more guns, and better shields.

BC Battlecruiser

This ship is essentially an uprated CA, and is converted from one in SFB to a more modern hull. It replaces the Light Plasma Mortars with Plasma Shotguns and adds two Plasma Blasters. Fly it like a CA, but note that the improved arcs of the Shotgun will let you make oblique passes instead of forcing you to centerline as often. This ship should roughly match up to the Constitution refit.

HDD Heavy Destroyer

A later-production war hull, this ship is intended to be the Gorn 'war cruiser'. While it is comparable to the CL in terms of size and profile it is actually quite different. Better shielding, more maneuverability and better structure armor are just the beginning. It also sports a Plasma Shotgun in lieu of the Light Mortar (Note that the Shotgun can be hit from either side, albeit only on a roll of 9). Of course, it also mounts two Plasma Blasters with more aggressive arcs than the BC. Designed to match up to the old Miranda class ship.

DNF Dreadnought

This is the big bad boy. The Gorn use this ship as a fleet leader and the anchor around which to build a strike force. Mounting 10 Particle Pummels, 2 Plasma Shotguns, 2 Plasma Blasters, and a full-sized Plasma Mortar, this is a fearsome ship for the era. It has comparable shields to the Federation-class Dreadnought, and should be a fair match against one. It is one of the few Gorn ships to sport 360 degree Particle Punmmels in the Primary, and can only do so due to its mass and power.

I plan to convert more Gorn ships as time allows, including the LSC Large Scout, CM Medium Cruiser, CS Strike Cruiser and of course… the BB Battleship!

* * *

This month's Relic of the Past comes from the long forgotten files of Tyrel Lohr's Bintari/K'Thonn Saga. The Nyglum Overmind was the "third empire" of that setting, and the most aloof. Very little information has ever been released about the Nyglum.

The Nyglum Overmind

Nyglum Physiology

The Nyglum appeared extremely alien to the Bintari upon first contact. Looking like blob-like lump, the Nyglum body is wrapped in a tough exoskeleton and a soft inner membrane. The jelly-like substance within a Nyglum ranges from a light lavendar to a dark, deep purple and gives them their purplish coloration. The substance also contains all of the Nyglum's major organs. Fluids circulate through fissures in the blubbery material, delivering nutrients throughout their body.

The Nyglum's only manipulator is their 'mouth', an extendable appendage located to the front of the Nyglum form. The Nyglum mouth is capable of fine manipulation, but is rather lethargic in movement. This has led to Nyglum actions being exceptionally precise and calculated. Impetuousness is seen as a mental handicap as a result.

In addition to serving as the Nyglum 'hand', this appendage also is the sole entry or exit point into the body. All sustenance and bodily waste passes through it. Most species will agree that the Nyglum have very poor table manners.

The Nyglum Join the Galactic Community

The Nyglum made First Contact with other interstellar cultures in 2059 when Bintari scouts discovered the territories of the Overmind. The Nyglum were extremely isolationist in their views and wanted little to do with the Bintari. The tenacious Bintari diplomatic teams found the Nyglum unwilling to commit to long-term diplomatic commitments. Finally, after months of negotiations, the Bintari were finally able to convince the Nyglum to affirm a border treaty. With a mutual border agreed upon, the Bintari left the Nyglum be.

However, shortly after First Contact with the galactic community was made, a faction of zealots lead by prominent religious

leaders began a campaign of terror intended to oust the persecutory monarchy which had, in the last hundred years, attempted vigorously to curb religious expression and suppress new forms of belief.

The fighting was intense. Former friends fell upon one another and the entire political structure caved in. The fighting was not restricted to Nyglumar. On all the Nyglum outposts, a war between the monarchists and the zealots raged. Amidst the chaos, the Nyglum navy declared itself neutral and refused to fight in support of either faction. They instead dug in and attempted to protect themselves from terrorist strikes aimed at crippling the opposition. They were caught in the middle and found neutrality to be the only safe solution.

The turbulence on Nyglumar and its colonies was not going unnoticed by the other races. The the newly implemented K'Thonn civilian government was still stinging from the wounds inflicted by its war debts owed to the Bintari. With government support was faltering and civil unrest on the rise, the K'Thonn leadership was looking for a way to redeem themselves in the court of public opinion. They saw the Nyglum as a campaign with which to invigorate the ailing nation. And so the war began.

The K'Thonn/Nyglum War Begins

The first world struck by the K'Thonn was a colony in the Iolor system. Iolor had long been a system of interest to the K'Thonn, but whose acquisition had alluded them due to the recent conflict with the Bintari Federation. On the asteroid of Qozor and other surrounding sites in the Iolor asteroid belt, geological surveys had discovered a large deposit of Quantium 40. The Nyglum had moved into the system soon after First Contact, their own scouts having unknowingly surveyed the system prior to Contact with the other races. Nyglum miners were now living in the asteroid belt, excavating and refining the Quantium 40.

This strategically important source of Quantium 40 was enough to justify war for the K'Thonn, and with civil strife having spread like wildfire within the Nyglum Overmind it would make its capture even easier. Qozor fell without a naval engagement, the Nyglum defenders fleeing back to Nyglumar rather than confront the invading K'Thonn fleet. The ground battle, however, proved costly for both sides.

Events would soon show that the Nyglum had more to worry about than just their civil war and the impending slaughter of the K'Thonn Hierarchy. Another race, the Kylon, were just making their fledgling appearance on the interstellar scene. As part of a deal to secure valuable ship hulls from the K'Thonn, the Kylon agreed to attack the coreward borders of the Nyglum Overmind. With the K'Thonn invading from upspin, all jump routes leading out of the Overmind would be effectively cut off. Within two days of the K'Thonn attack at Qozar, a small Kylon fleet comprised of converted freighters struck the J'Kai system, capturing several merchantmen and destroying the only defenders in the system. Another Nyglum system had fallen.

The Nyglum React

Realizing too late that their squabbling had cost them too much already, the religious faction scaled back its military activities against the monarchists. However, the religious zealots continued to refuse to submit to the rule of the monarchy. Instead, the zealots formed their own counter coalition called the Holy Worldly Alliance to coordinate their own defense efforts.

With both the K'Thonn and Kylon one jump away from Nyglumar, the monarchists and naval authorities met to discuss coordinating retaliatory strikes against the aggressors as a last ditch effort to protect Nyglumar from invasion. Neither side believed that the Overmind would be able to survive a war on the home front, not during the current crisis, and that shifting the war away from homeworld would be the only way to ensure its safety.

Both sides agreed to a single plan of action. One of the few Nyglum jump-capable craft would lead a handful of other warships, loaded with monarchist troops and supplies, would make a strike into the Iolor system and attempt to retake Qozor. It was hoped that the liberating of Qozor would force the K'Thonn's own expeditionary forces to fall back to Iolor, buying Nyglumar time to bolster its defenses.

Through historical hindsight it is easy to see that their plan might very well have worked and changed the course of the war. The K'Thonn would have had to split their forces even if they did not commit everything to the retaking of Qozor. Fate, however, was not on the Nyglum's side. The main K'Thonn fleet had already made the jump to Nyglumar, and they were only two days out.

The Battle of Nyglumar

The Battle of Nyglumar can be better called a slaughter. The Nyglum had few combat-worthy craft available for their homeworld's defense. A large portion of the available naval strength had already been dispatched to Iolor and was unavailable for the homeworld's defense. However, everything that the Nyglum had made a stand against the K'Thonn force in orbit of Nyglumar that day.

The planet's orbital satellite network was the Nyglum's last hope for redemption, but in the end hope would fail them and Nyglumar would fall to the K'Thonn advance. Only a

few Nyglum ships managed to escape destruction, jumping out at the last second in defeat. They and the strike fleet dispatched only days before were all that was left of the Nyglum navy and its independent presence among the stars.

Beginning the day of the invasion and lasting the next week and a half, the K'Thonn pummeled Nyglumar with mass drivers and plasma weapons, leveling almost every city on the planet's surface. The Nyglum had fallen.

Nyglum Military

The Nyglum military technologies were almost all electromagnetic-based. Their ships tended to be lightly built and structurally weak with little to no armor. These ships relied almost exclusively on their primitive electromagnetic (EM) shielding systems to defend them from damage.

The exotic electromagnetic weapons in the Nyglum arsenal are weaker than the weapons used by other races, but are designed with an eye towards deterrence and disabling enemy ships than brute force. Because of this, Nyglum military commanders (the few that survived a battle) found themselves unable to counter enemy ships without resorting to more defensive tactics.

Because of their multiple weaknesses, the Nyglum were almost wholly unprepared for war

with the K'Thonn and had very little chance of winning. Though the Nyglum lightning rods could strip the hellbore cannons from the enemy's hull, the first wave of fire would almost certainly eliminate the Nyglum forces. It is no wonder that these ships were unable to withstand the might of the K'Thonn military machine.

Nyglum Starships

Jah Kahlor Burst Frigate

The Jah Kahlor Burst Frigate was designed to serve as a dedicated burst launcher platform. Sacrificing shielding capacity for more burst launchers, the Jah Kahlor is a terrifying opponent that can fire salvo after salvo of burst pulses at the enemy.

During the war, the Jah Kahlor was one of the few ships capable to doing considerable damage to K'Thonn dreadnoughts. They were, however, unable to fend off fighters and most were quickly overwhelmed and destroyed by enemy Kalarh Heavy Fighters.

Tvorum Strike Cruiser

The Tvorum Strike Cruiser represents the final iteration of Nyglum ship design and construction. Built only a few years before the disastrous K'Thonn/Nyglum War, the Tvorum Strike Cruisers were formidable opponents replete with an arsenal of lightning

rods and burst launchers. The ship's jump engine also gave it the capability to strike at enemies without being tied to established jump routes, a fact that the Nyglum pinned their last hopes to during the war.

Uzyll Ohr Frigate

This modern upgrade of the Ohr hull was used heavily during the modern period, serving as a system patrol ship within the Nyglum fleet. Although the Uzyll Ohrs remained competent fighting ships, they were ill prepared to take on the forces of the K'Thonn Hierarchy or Kylon Union.

For more Nyglum units, visit: http://planetside.firenebula.com/bintarisaga/ships.php?race=nyglum

WING COMMANDER IV
THE PRICE OF FREEDOM
BABYLON 5 WARS CONVERSION

The Wing Commander Conversion Gets a Taste of Freedom
By Heiko Wisper

I decided to design these ships when I came across Dareith's Wing Commander ships. I wanted to play the Border Worlds and no ships were available, so I decided to create some ships of my own. I took the fighters from Wing Commander 4 and converted them to Babylon 5 Wars rules, using Dareith's ships as a guide.

I hope that these ships will help to make Babylon 5 Wars more appealing for Wing Commander fans and those who want to get to know the epic battle of Humans against the Kilrathi (except for the bad movie *shudder*).

(Editor's Note: The ship control sheets included for these units are currently only available in JPG format. Look for these to be converted to PDF format as time allows!)

Want More Wing Commander Units?

Visit Dareith's website at:

http://students.washington.edu/gll/

for a full listing of Wing Commander ships, particularly fighters and ships from the Wing Commander 3 era.

Ships of the Union of Border Worlds (UBW)

The UBW Navy

The Navy of the Union of Border Worlds primarily consists of outmoded Terran Confederation fighters such as Rapiers, Ferrets and Scimitars. The rarely used bombers are outdated and heavily modified Broadswords. On a case by case basis, normal fighters are converted to carry a single torpedo, reducing the fighters' manoeuvrability drastically. In the last several years, the Border Worlds designed some craft of their own: the Banshee Light Fighter; the Vindicator, a medium sized Fighter/Bomber; and the popular Avenger, a real torpedo bomber rivalling even the Confed Longbow on certain fields.

As with their fighters, the ships of the UBW Navy are all older classes long cast off by the Confederation. This includes such classes as the Tallahassee Cruiser as well as Sheffield, Exeter and Gilgamesh Destroyers.

Most of the UBW carriers are of the outdated Bengal class, but much of the hodgepodge cruiser fleet carries an additional hangar bay slung under the hull. This common alteration allows the Border world fleets to field enough fighters to counter potential threat sources. The recently developed Intrepid Light Carrier shares this design feature as well, connecting

two destroyer hulls via a central hangar bay. The most advanced ship in the Union's navy is the Concordia Fleet Carrier *UBW Princeton*. It was captured during the Black Lance Affaire by Admiral Wilson during a raid on a Confed naval base used by the Black Lance. Later it was used to support the Intrepid during the "Race of the 3 Stars", a manoeuvre to escape the super carrier *Vesuvius*. After the incident, the carrier was requisitioned by the Union of Border Worlds as reparation for the destruction of UBW ships by the Black Lance.

No one knows what future technological developments will come out of the Union, but they are on the road to become a true force to be reckoned with in the galaxy.

Capital Ships

Intrepid Light Carrier

The need for new carriers in the UBW arose after the Battle for Terra, where most of the Unions' own carriers were destroyed fighting alongside Admiral Geoffrey Tolwyn's Confederate forces in defence of Earth from the Kilrathi super carriers.

When the war ended, several wrecked Durango Destroyers were left floating in UBW space. The Confederation Senate was more concerned with domestic matters rather then military, so they sold these and additional hulls to the UBW, in hopes of creating some sort of buffer zone in order to protect the border from future Kilrathi attacks.

Because most of the remaining carriers in the UBW militia were obsolete or damaged beyond repair, the admiralty decided to take drastic steps to enlarge the fighter compliment of most militias' battle groups. They took the hulls of two Durango Destroyers and connected them via a hangar bay capable of supporting thirty-six fighters. While these changes were practical, the resulting carrier had several design flaws. The ship has no tractor beams to guide fighters into the hangar, making landing procedures a difficult and often dangerous task. Additionally the protecting force fields for the hangar entrances were subject to malfunctions, causing the death of pilots and crews on the first prototypes until a solution could be found. The new system uses two force fields closely behind the other in case one has a malfunction.

Increased power requirements added extra stress on the reactor, limiting the number of weapons that could be installed on the ship. Because of this the Intrepid class is armed solely with several Laser Turrets in wide firing arcs, lacking any other anti-ship armament.

The most famous of this vessels was the *Intrepid*, commandeered by the famous Captain Eisen and then Colonel Christopher Blair, when it intercepted and destroyed the Confed super carrier *TCS Vesuvius* and uncovered a conspiracy in the highest offices of the Confed navy.

Union of Border Worlds Fighters

Banshee Light Fighter

The Banshee represents a new type of Border Worlds craft. Rather than depending on outmoded Confed fighters, the militia command decided to design their own light fighter. The design requirements were clear: build a craft with mobility, shielding and armament equal to the top of the line Confed fighter, the Arrow. Because of the limited technology available to the UBW's engineers, they had to work with relative light fighter weapons.

What the Banshee fighter lacks in quality it makes up for in quantity. The fighter is equipped with four linked MK II Laser Cannons to the hull, enough to break shield on most fighters and cause serious damage to enemy light fighters.

Possibly the best feature of the Banshee is the secondary armament. The Banshee has four Type 2 missile racks, but adds one experimental Leech Cannon and a Scatter Gun. This makes this small fighter particularly deadly, even if the power plant is not powerful enough to allow both the secondary and primary weapons to be fired at the same time. The manoeuvrability is equal to the Arrow and

the fighter has a good chance to outrun enemies he could not engage.

The weak spot of the Banshee is its structure, making it one of the most fragile fighters in the fleet.

Today, the Banshee has become the frontline light attack craft for the Union, enabling the militia to phase older fighters, like the Scimitar or Epee, out off service.

Vindicator Medium Fighter Bomber

The Vindicator was born from the need to have a medium fighter with anti-capital ship capabilities. While the Border World militia owns many medium fighters, they lack heavy fighters and bombers. So the designers came up with a multipurpose medium fighter/bomber: the Vindicator. The Vindicator carries an impressive fighter armament consisting of two light Tachyon and Laser Cannons. It also mounts a Leech Cannon and a Stormfire Gun, a form of low-tech antimatter machine guns.

Against capital ships, the fighter carries up to three MK IV Torpedoes, making it even more dangerous than the heavier Thunderbolt. To improve its defences on a torpedo run, the designers improved the shields over the Confed Hellcat and added two rear firing Laser Guns.

But all these advances were bought at a terrible price. The Vindicator is as ponderous as most heavier bombers, requiring fighter escort in order to reach its target and deliver its torpedoes. This makes the Vindicator a death trap for most rookies and is not very popular among better pilots when it comes to operating in a bomber role. Against fighters, however, the Vindicator can match the Hellcat in nearly every field except speed.

Today the Vindicator has gained in popularity, not just because the famous Christopher Blair' combat actions against the Black Lance, but because the fighter is a raw improvement over the older Ferrets and Rapiers in the Union's arsenal. The Vindicator rendered these older fighter designs obsolete. Another fact is that pirates who prey on the border have begun to use more technical advanced fighters like the Thunderbolt or Bastard.

Avenger Heavy Bomber

The Avenger is the first real native bomber of the Union of Border Worlds. Borrowing heavily from the Broadsword, the Avenger is

technologically the best the Union could develop. Armed with two Photon and Mass Driver Cannons, the maximum damage caused by these weapons does not match that of the Longbow. Even the shields of the Avenger are weaker than those on the Confed bomber. This makes Avengers easy targets for light to medium fighters if attacked without escort. To slightly defuse this weakness, the Avenger mounts two aft turreted Mass Driver Guns and has a higher speed than the standard Longbow, giving the bomber the ability to exit the battle quickly if things go poorly.

The Avenger has become the most popular bomber in the Union because it outguns and out flies the Broadsword and has better shielding. Additionally, its ability to launch four torpedoes at once makes it popular among pilots who regularly engage cap ships.

Fighters of the Terran Confederation

The last great advances in fighter technology were made during the closing days of the Kilrathi War, culminating in the development of the Excalibur Superiority Fighter. Equipped with 4 Tachyon Guns, a Reaper Gun and an experimental cloaking device, these fighters were the most advanced in known space, instilling fear in any opponent. With crumbling military budgets and their enemy defeated, these high-tech ships became too expensive to build and maintain. Together with demobilisations, the Confed's defences are beginning to slowly wear away.

The Black Lance incident demonstrated this weakness at a terrible price, but it did show what could be achieved with continued research and development. The Black Lance's Dragon and the Flashpack are the best examples. The recent outbreak of hostilities with the Nephilim and the high losses therein has shown Confed High Command that a large, well-trained and motivated force must be maintained, even in peace times. And, while the shipyards and production facilities are trying to catch up with demand, the designers in their labs are working on the next generation of Confederation fighters.

Bearcat Medium Fighter

The Bearcat was designed as the replacement for the aging Hellcat V. It came on the scene early in the Black Lance incident and was a powerful addition to Confederate forces. Armed with four light Tachyon

Guns, the Bearcat could take on nearly any fighter. The fighter incorporates stronger shields and structure than the Hellcat and could even engage smaller capital ships of the Union of Border Worlds and destroy them.

When the fighter went into mass production, the design's first real problems became apparent. A single fighter needed more maintenance than a bomber because of its experimental ion drive systems and the light Tachyon Guns. This made the Bearcat one
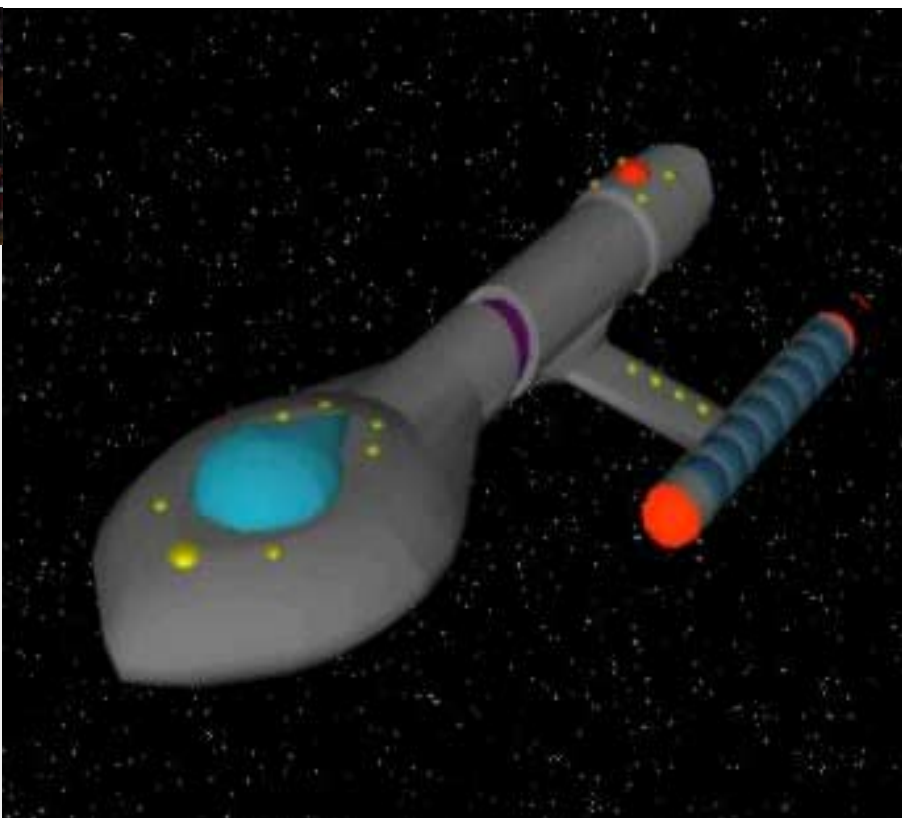
of the most expensive fighters in the Confederation's arsenal. Soon thereafter, the production of new fighters was cut to nearly zero, with only a trickle of new fighters leaving production lines. Most of these were meant as replacements for fighters destroyed in combat.

* * *

Earthling Destroyer

The Destroyer class vessel came out shortly after the Heavy Cruiser, and utilised systems and ideas that were not incorporated into the larger vessel. Chief among these was the use of lower yield nukes, and left over anti-satellite laser weapons employed in the Star Wars program. Slightly more nimble than the Heavy Cruiser, the Destroyer was used as an escort for larger fleets or for system defence. The lack of a hyper drive made it reliant on other ships and thus

BATTLEFORCE: APRIL

This Month's Challenge

You are in command of a small, remote sector base. A new and strangely well-funded Raider group has begun operations in your sector. Your mission is, with the ships and men available to you, to find out who is backing these pirates.

Choose up to 4,000 points in ships, fighters, and marines. No capital ships are available to you at this time. The raiders are known to operate at least two Dragonships and several other vessels, including armed freighter conversions.

Your mission is to intercept the pirates when they attempt a convoy raid and capture either a vessel intact, or at least one live officer to be interrogated. (Officers may be captured individually via a marine unit carrying out a successful 'rescue a hostage' mission against the C&C.)

Victory conditions will depend on three factors: Captives taken, combat loss ratio, and convoy losses.

The Battleforce Submissions

Narn Fleet
Kayle Skolaris

3 Ka'Toc Battle Destroyers: 1725
1 Breaching Pod slot purchased for each Destroyer: 30
18 Gorith Medium Fighters: 720
3 Sho'Kos Patrol Cutters: 975

1 Breaching Pod slot purchased for each Cutter: 30
6 T'Rakh Armed Breaching Pod: 480

3960 points

Once the enemy is located, pick a target likely to be the command ship and send your cutters in as a wolfpack. Pummel the target with Burst Beam fire to cripple it then attach breaching pods, board it, and capture an officer. Remember, these are ARMED breaching pods, each one carrying the same weaponry as a Frazi heavy fighter. They can defend themselves quite well. While your pods are doing their job, have your battle destroyers cut the rest of the enemy fleet to pieces from long range with heavy laser fire. Sprinkle with medium fighters as needed. Cook for 4 hours on Broil or until your opponent surrenders.

Random Raider Anti-Raiding Regiment....
By Agnostic Angel

2 Galleon
2 Assault Sloop
2 Sloop
36 Delta-V
12 Mako

3992 pts

Why what I picked? It's simple. The Delta-Vs are going to make the outer patrol, and what looks like 4 Laertes/Sloops are defending the convoy. The Galleons hide with the convoy (as Bulk Freighters), and you wait until the lead ship shows... That's when the assault sloops unleash their demonic numbers of marines (10, + the 12 from the Makos EACH). The "normal" sloops make good quick attack ships, and the Galleons make good convoy defenders as well as having some decent power. With plenty of Delta-Vs to provide cover for the Makos, as well as cover for the convoy, you've got everything you need to make a good capture/defence mission for nobody in particular.

Bring in the Transporters!
By Christian Meador

Chase Group
Cheyenne Corvette, 500
+2 marines 20
Sabre Attack Frigate, 400
Sabre Attack Frigate, 400
Scorpio LCV 90
Scorpio LCV 90

Command Group
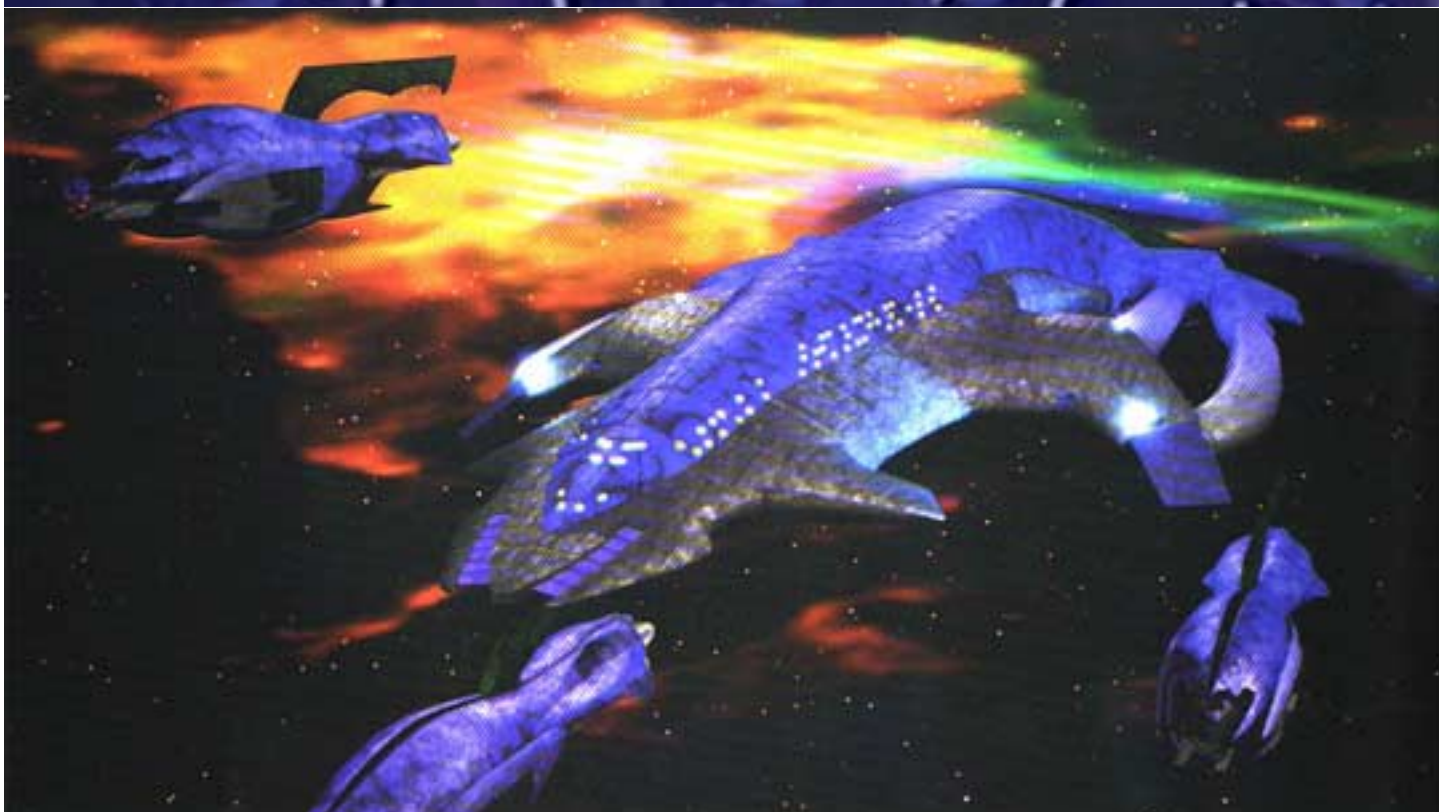Constitution Refit, 440
Soyuz Scout, 480

Assault Group
Chandley Assault Frigate 485
+4 marines 40
Chandley Assault Frigate 485
+4 marines 40
Chandley Assault Frigate 485
+4 marines 40

Total: 3995

Thoughts - the Command group sniffs them out, the chase group ties them up, and the Assault group swoops in and goes for the kill.

Strengths:

Having a scout would be a big benefit in chasing down pirates I would think (certainly in the campaign rules they are for picking up targets). While not a great fleet scout, the Soyuz ELINT would help against raiders (especially breaking locks on ships with downed shields).

The chase group is fast for the Fed (max accel 5 and 4 for the ships, 6 for the LCVs), and fairly deadly at range with the Cheyenne's Advanced Photon as it can fire 3 photons in the initial salvo ,and the Sabres can add in 1 additional, with the Scoprios providing light photon support.

The Assault Group is just sick - the SCS gives the Chandley's 6 Marines by default, so each carries 10 with the 4 extra. In addition they have +2 Combat transporters, so each turn each Chandley can beam 5 Marines to the ship of their choice within 25 hexes. Yes, they have to drop their shields, but 15 marines appearing on anybody's flag ship on one turn is going to get their attention. The fact they can do so two turns in a row should make a bit of a psychological impact. The scout would provide EW as well to help cover the time of vulnerability.

Weaknesses:

Dropping shields to beam hurts, but not as much as 15 marines. And that they can do so at range 25(!!!) seems a bit much to me, but I'll take it.

Not a lot of heavy firepower, but should be able to fight off the raiders once the ships started getting swamped by marines.

Low EW also hurts, but you can afford to be generous with the OEW when your shields can dull the initial blow of your opponent.

Fighter protection is normally a problem with this Era fed, but 29 medium and 16 light phasers should help out. If necessary with acceleration you could fire 45 light phasers a turn at 1d10+4. Arcs might be a problem though.

COPS: Abbai on Patrol
By Kizarvexis

"...Ab-bai, Ab-bai, whatcha gonna do? Whatcha gonna do when they come for you?"

This is Janice Hadley from "COPS: Abbai on Patrol". ISN is on patrol with an Abbai Military Police Fleet in our shuttles 'Amarillo' and 'Journalist'. Today we are patrolling the border near Rohric, looking for a new group of raiders. Raiders like to use the former Dilgar colonies as staging areas to prey upon the League of Non-Aligned Worlds.

We have been hearing rumors among the crew that the group of raiders we are after are special in some way. Our cameraman Bobby Frits tried to translate the whispers among the crew and believes the raiders are

receiving 'girls' to their ships. The fleet being assembled will catch one of these special raider dreadnoughts and ISN will be there to document this hu... /um slavery in sentient beings.

As you can see from the footage shot from 'Amarillo' and 'Journalist', the Abbai fleet numbers four Tiraca Cruisers, two Biscaria Escort Cruisers, the Fetula cutter 'Judisch' and a Shyarie Command Cruiser. Captain Annatar was able to grant us access to the conference among her cousins on the bridge of the Shyarie Command Cruiser. The assembled Captains, all named Annatar, planned the strategy for capturing a raider ship or at least capturing a raider captain. After this commercial break, we will show you a mock battle vs simulated raiders that was performed just before we left 'Pirocia' Base to start our patrol.

Fleet composition as provided by Annatar Rao Tiway of the Fetula Warrant Cutter 'Judisch':

1 Shyarie Jammer Frigate
1 Fetula Warrant Cutter
4 Tiraca Attack Frigates
2 Biscaria Escort Frigates
4 Kaltika Breaching Pods
2 ISN unarmed Shuttles
2 extra Gaim Marine contingents
4,000 points total

The Abbai strategy is to disable raider ships with the Tiraca Frigates and board them with breaching pods to find out what 'gifts' the raiders are receiving and from who they are receiving these 'gifts'. The Shyarie and the Fetula each have an extra contingent of Gaim Marines and the Shyarie is carrying a breaching pod in place of a shuttle. The Biscaria Escort Frigates will deal with any raider fighters and the Fetula will escort the Shyarie until the chance to board a ship presents itself. All combat against any raider group will be prosecuted at long range with the Shyarie providing ELINT support as necessary.

If You Want to Catch a Raider, Send a Drazi.
By Narsham

1 Claweagle (300)
1 Strikebird with 12 Star Snakes and 1 Breaching Pod (980)
1 Eyehawk (600)
2 Darkhawks (900)
1 Sleekbird with 5 Pods (800)
1 Warbird (480)
2 L and 2 H missiles (20)
Total 4000.

This fleet is focused on the threat of capture. If the Raiders don't deal with the Claweagle quickly, it and the excellent Shallana Armed Breaching Pods might well capture a Dragonship after missiles or Star Snakes take the side out. And they'll have to focus resources to do so, as the Eyehawk can loan defense to the Claweagle. (Otherwise, the Eyehawk is along for the jump engine.)

If the Raiders concentrate fire on the Claweagle, the Pods go in to capture a few of them while the Darkhawks devastate the Raider ships with a missile barrage. With little Raider DEW likely, they should be fairly easy to hit, and the Darkhawks will be very difficult to hurt in return.

The other ships can either hunt fighters to protect the Pods and Darkhawks, or go for kills on Raider ships. Unless there are a lot of Delta-Vs, the fleet will likely try to convince them to attack its ships and take the hits, rather than focusing on killing them. If the Raider fighters hold back, though, the Star Snakes and the three 'bird-class ships will engage them to clear the way for the Pods.

Drazi don't care much about merchants, so an option would be to let the Raider fighters engage the convoy and then attack the Raider ships. Who knows, the Drazi might exact a "fee" from the convoy owners after the battle...

Alright, Here's the Pak'ma'ra Fleet:
By Todd Boyce

2 Urik'hal Destroyers (890)
4 Tra'shu'li Armed Liners (1260)
1 Hangar modification for an additional BP (10 points)
3 Pa'da'shar Troop Liners (1050)
19 Or'ti'nam Breaching Pods (760)

3970 points

Each Urik'hal with 2 Tra'shu'li as escorts will attempt to destroy each of the two Dragonships.

The Pa'da'shar will immediately launch BPs which will go after the smaller raider units and attempt to do takeover operations. The Pa'da'shar will escort the BPs protecting them under the umbrella of plasma webs.

Balosian Anti-Pirate Force
By Radon Carl

2 Kraasus Destroyers
5 Resha Patrol Frigates
2 Fessa Warships
22 Shasi light fighters
2 Shapa Armed Breaching Pods

3975 points

Strip the pirates weapons off at range as they close to attack. There are 16 ion cannons in this force - that's 8 shots per turn doing 21 point average rakes starting at range 30 - 40.

The Kraasus fly escorts to either side of the convoy - 3 and 9 o'clock, the Reshas are at 11, 12, 1, 5, and 7 o'clock, and the Fessas are mixed in with the freighters.

When the pirates attack, start stripping them at long range and while they close. Get the fighters out there to cover the armed breaching pods, which will land and capture the prisoner. Move in a zig-zag so that half the ion

cannons can bear each round, and fire them off no matter how lousy the chance to hit. Enough WILL hit to strip the weapons and thrusters off the attackers that when the surviving ships close so that the when the 36 SPB's come within range, massive damage will occur, making the capture of the stripped hulks an easy mission.

Personally, I like the idea of massed firepower - this fleet has enough to give an attacking dragonship heartburn. Assuming full DEW for the dragonship, at range 40, the ion cannons will have between a 25 & 35% chance to hit - so figure 3 out of 8 hit, with average damage of 21 per rake. First round maybe an MPC falls off, but nothing critical happens. Round 2 the range closes to 30 - now the ion cannons have a 35 - 45% chance to hit - so 3 more hit, and now things are starting to take enough damage to fall off. By range 20, the chance to hit now means 4 ion cannon hits - and that's one sick dragonship. Escorting ships and fighters would be seeing potshots from all those SPB's - enough to kill 6 flights of fighters per turn if they all hit.

And that's one reason I like Balosians - they may not live through all the battles, but they'll make sure that you know you've been kissed.

It Pays to be Fibrous :)
By Travis Watson

Revised Sshel'ath anti-raider fleet:

4x Ushula Direct Assault Frigate- 800
-6x Marine Contingent (plus the additional 40)- 60
3x Tasholn Destroyer- 1200
3x Skavna Torpedo Frigate- 1050
1x Karaut Stealth Destroyer- 475
1x Vahskal Patrol Cutter- 120
-12x Skrehga Fighter- 288

Total- 3993

46 marine contingents.... nice.

Plenty of Gauss Cannons for doing called shots, and EM torps to critical them into submission. Meanwhile, the Ushulas are (of course) prepping the pirates for what they have coming to them- "a short

drop with a sudden stop." (sorry. I had to take it :)).

It's Just Business
By Kizarvexis

Vor'lex looked across the board room. "So we are all agreed?", he said. No one dissented against his will. So Vor'lex spoke, "The motion is passed. We will form a false convoy to lure these new raiders out into a trap. Send a lightly coded tightbeam message to the Director in sector 4. The raiders should intercept the message and fall into our trap."

1 Vaarl Scout Saucer
2 Vyreel Patrol Carriers (S10)
24 Zorth Light Fighters
2 Vortna Tugs
3 Xoti-A OSAT (in false cargo pods)
1 Xoti-B OSAT (in a false cargo pod)
1 Vyshesh Free Trader (RPP2)
6 Zyleen Breaching Pods
1 extra marine contingent
3,995 total points

The Vree trap is a supposed convoy of Q-40, moving through

space recently marauded by the raiders. When the raiders appear the Vortna will blow the false cargo panels off the OSATs to make a bastion from which to fight the raiders. The Zorth light fighters will attack the raider fighters and if successful, can make antishipping strikes. ELINT from the Vaarl is a force multiplier that the raiders shouldn't have, and the antimatter cannons on the OSATs and Scout should be able to disable a raider vessel for followup boarding by the breaching pods. The Vortna Tugs can tow home any vessels so disabled that they can not move under their own power.

Send in the MARINES
By Kizarvexis

The Kor-Lyan are going for the swarm approach.

1 Trylkan Ballistic Destroyer
4 Axor Assault Frigates (has grappling claws)
2 Fenja Assault Leaders (has grappling claws)
1 Vaklar Logistics Frigate
24 Ailyan Breaching Pods

57 Type-A Antifighter missiles
10 Ballistic Mines: Acc +8, Dam D10+16, Rng 3, IFF
16 Ballistic Mines: Acc +6, Dam D10+12, Rng 5, IFF

3,997 total points

5 Ballistic Mine Launchers
4 Limpet-Bore Torpedo Launchers

Herd the raiders with mines and strip essential systems with A missiles, basic missiles and LBT's. Swarm wounded ships with marines.
The 6 assault ships and 24 breaching pods, bring 112 marine contingents!

More Marines
By Kizarvexis

Tee'la went to his sector general. "Sir, after the recent unpleasantness with the humans, believe I have found a way to secure our objectives overwhelmingly with a little less risk. One of my collectors found a group of human outlaws who are apparently receiving some high tech gifts for an unknown benefactor. I will task 3 collectors to bring this group back for study. Why should we take fighter pilots when we can get whole ship fulls of subjects for study? And since they are outlaws, the human government should not care if they are gone!"

3 Strieb Collector Ships
14 Breaching Pods
4,000 total points

Soften the raiders up with Blast Lasers and pummel them into submission with Burst Beams. Then send over the 14 (armed!) breaching pods with the 55 contingents of marines to select study subjects.
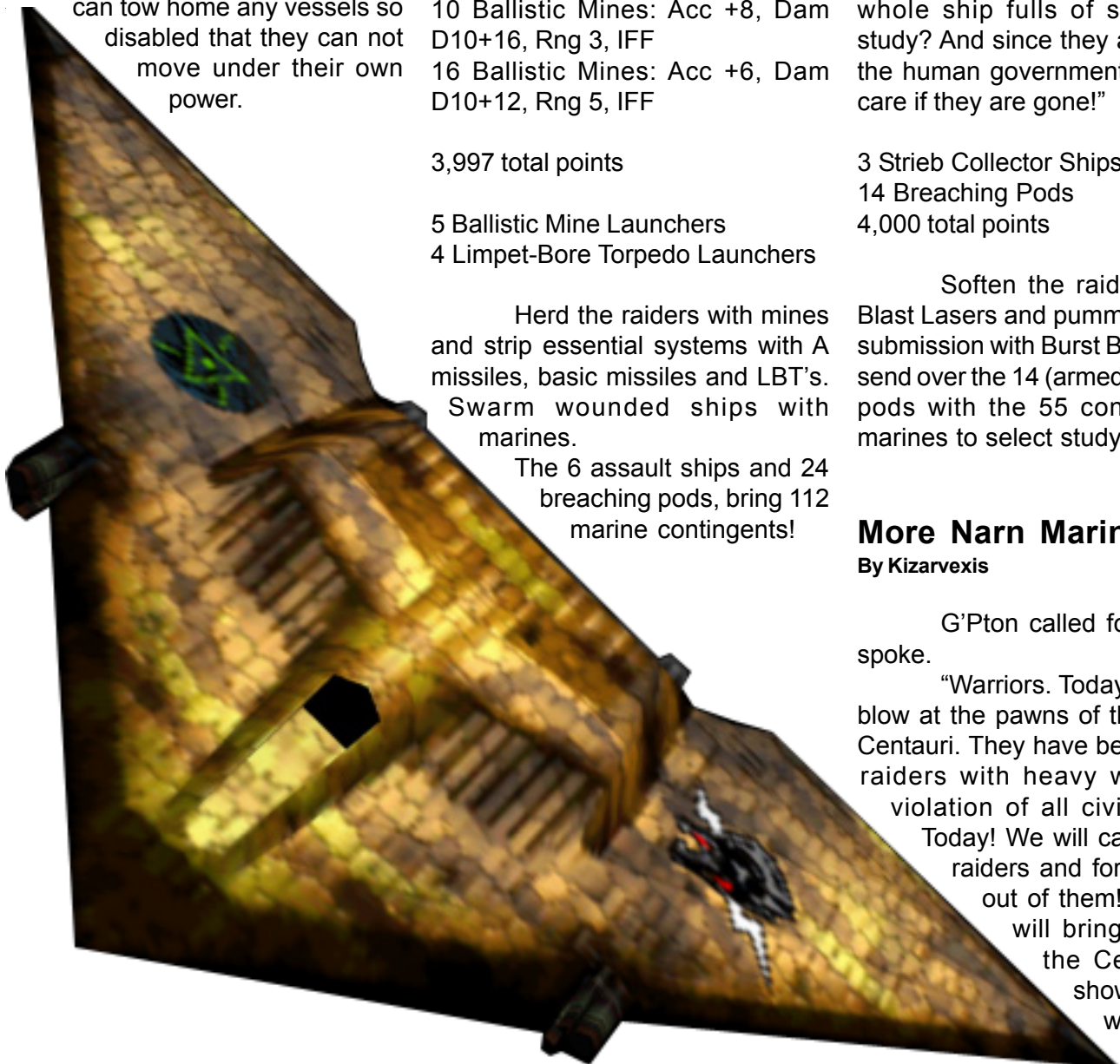
More Narn Marines
By Kizarvexis

G'Pton called for quiet and spoke.
"Warriors. Today we strike a blow at the pawns of the cowardly Centauri. They have been suppling raiders with heavy weapons in violation of all civilized laws. Today! We will capture these raiders and force the truth out of them! Today! We will bring shame on the Centauri and show the galaxy what dogs they are!

Ka'Tan Pulse Destroyer
Ka'Toc Battle Destroyer
12 Gorith Fighters
4 Thentus Frigates
D'Tarn Plasm Lt Gunboat
4 T'Rakh Armed Breaching Pods
2 T'Rakh Breaching Pods
1 extra contingent of Marines.

4,000 points exactly

Fighters on fighters, Ka'Tan and Ka'Toc hurt ships and the Thentus disable them. The D'Tarn helps where needed.

13 total marine contingents

Earth Alliance Force
By Kizarvexis

Gentlemen, your mission is the disablement and capture of a group of raiders. We believe these raiders are receiving high tech equipment and weapons, so capture of raider officers is paramount. Report to Cpts Johns and Roberts for movement orders. Dismissed.

Fleet
2 Hermes Priority Transports
12 Anti-Raider Starfurys
24 Fighter Y-missiles
1 Artemis Escort Frigate
1 Olympus Corvette
8 L Long-Range missiles
2 C Chaff missiles
4 X HARM missiles
2 Tethys Police Cutters
6 Lamprey Breaching pods
4,000 points exactly

The Starfurys perform fighter sweeps and then assist with anti-shipping strikes. The Olympus uses it's special missiles on a likely ship for boarding, with the other ships assisting. The Tethys can be detached for anti-fighter duties as needed.

12 total marine contingents.

Markab Force
By Kizarvexis

"Gentlebeings" said Markos the elder.
"A hateful group of raiders has been marauding our peaceful shrines. This must stop. You have been tasked to assault these vile beings and caputre what officers you can. We suspect that they have been getting assistance from unknown parties and we wish to discover who these benefactors are. Your mission profile has been downloaded into your datapads. Let us pray before you depart."

Fleet
3 Martoba Patrol Cutters
2 Maftora Police Ships
28 Drofta Medium Fighters
7 Dojafa Breaching Pods

1 extra marine contingent
3,998 points

Long-range fire before closing:
6 Plasma Waves

Short-range power to disable ships:
3 Particle Cannons, 6 Md Plasma Cannons,

Anti-fighter work:
14 Scatter Guns
28 Lt. Scatter Guns on the fighters (d3 shots of 2d6 IIRC)

4 Stun Beams for disabling fighters and raider crewmen

15 total marine contingents

* * *

Ask Zathras!

By David Ainsworth

Much Welcomings!

Ah, the timings are right for another look at some letters. Better work than the other doings Draal is wanting from Zathras. Here is first letter.

Dear Zathras,

We haven't heard anything from you lately. What happened? Did Draal fire you?

A Concerned Lurker

Ah, much firings around here, but not of Zathras. Great war, but great hope for peace. Also great hope to get rid of Zathras. Of all of us, he is hardest to live with. Always bragging about being expert in crisis management. This meaning that he tell us to solve crisis while he manages. Very annoying. Or was that Zathras? Hard to keep track sometimes.

So, when Draal send Zathras away, much hoping that he succeed, and much more hoping that he not be returning. Until Draal give all of Zathras' work... to Zathras! Make Zathras pay part of health insurance, too. Nothing ever goes right for Zathras.

Then we hear that Zathras is a big hero. Gets cushy job for Minbari hero. Probably take credit for that, too.

Meanwhile, Zathras having to do extra work. Not helping that strange visitor from somewhere be scuttling around in corridors, climbing up walkways and throwing rocks at Zathras. Draal told Zathras to find visitor... Foofo, was name? But Zathras believes that Zathras does not want to find Foofo. In fact, Zathras see Zathras collecting rocks for Foofo to throw at Zathras.

Much hurtings. Next letter.

Dear Strongbad,

What kind of video games do yu play? Do yu like to play with Homestar?

Crapfully yours,
Stan

Ah, Zathras has no time for games, Stan. He spend time doing things for Draal. Like spell checking so Draal does not look like idiot when he writes letters. Maybe you need to hire someone to do that, Stan.

Wait... this letter sent to some person named Strongbad, not to Zathras. Very sad, Zathras cannot even get his own mail. Gets stuck with old mail sent to Internet celebrities.

Dear Zathras,

I was wondering, just on a theoretical basis you understand, what effect Minbari Jammers might have on Orieni Hunter-Killers. Is their range penalty affected by a jammer, or not? Just idle curiosity.

Sincerely,
Khorst Rak, Leader of the Blessed

Ah, interesting question, Rak. Rak... odd name, some like something Fwi-fwi would throw at Zathras. A Jammer interferes with the computer systems Hunter-Killers use to target ships, reducing the time they have to find a solution and aim properly for a ram. That means that they do double the range penalty for Hunter-Killers even though they do not lock on to Minbari ships.

Wonder why Rak wanted to know that?

- Zathras

Have a Question? Ask Zathras!
zathras@firenebula.com

* * *

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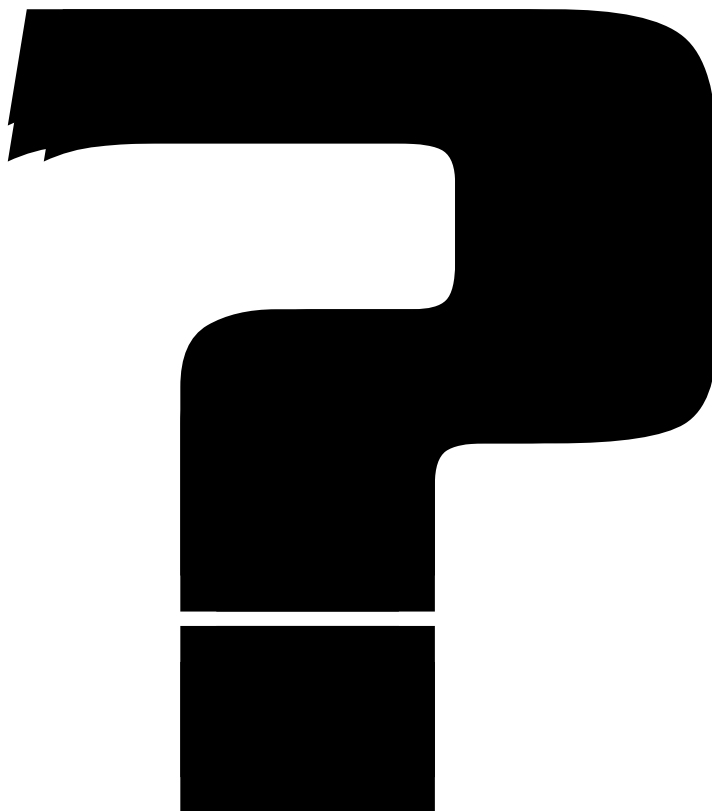submissions@firenebula.com

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Coming Next Issue...

Z Minus 24 Days

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