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CONTENTS

Agents of Gaming and Rob Glass have released two of the "near final" version ship control sheets for the B5 Compendium component of Fleet Action Two. The rule systems have been significantly refined since the earlier EarthForce and Narn playtest control sheets. These have been provided to demonstrate the "flavor", complexity and designs of two very popular Minbari vessels. Supplimental rules to explain their systems are included here.
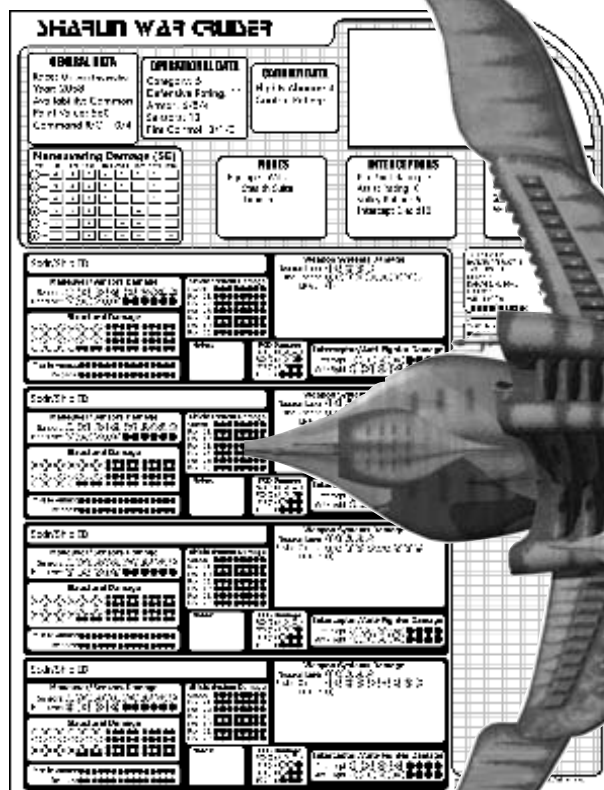
THE FULL VERSIONS OF THE FLEET ACTION TWO SHIP CONTROL SHEETS SHOWN HERE WITHIN THE ATTACHMENTS FOLDER

Notes about Minbari Technology
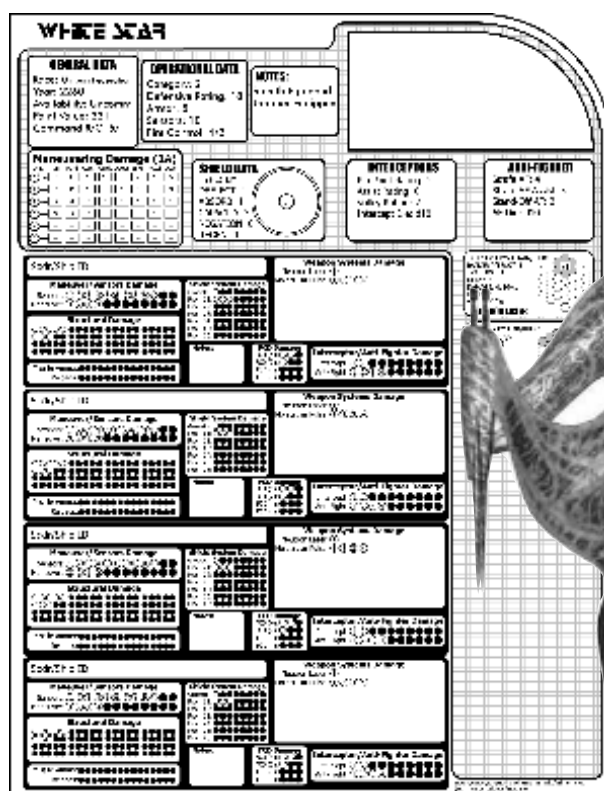**From Agents of Gaming**

THE Minbari tend to utilize two pieces of technology throughout their fleet: stealth suites and Jammers. Together, these two pieces of equipment make it very difficult for an enemy to engage the Minbari on even terms. However, it also means that most Minbari vessels are more expensive than the equivalent enemy ship. Following is a basic synopsis of how these systems work.

Stealth Suite: These suites consist of specially designed materials that absorb incoming sensor radiations. This tends to have two effects. First, ships equipped with these systems are much more difficult to detect at range enabling them to close with the enemy a great deal before the enemy knows they are there. The second effect is that it makes it very difficult for fire control directors to obtain solid locks on the vessel. In game terms, this increases the range bracket to the ship by one band. Thus, it is impossible to engage a Minbari ship at either short or extreme ranges (short becomes medium and extreme falls off the chart). Stealth suites are not effective against an enemy whose sensor technologies are two levels higher than the mounting ship's overall tech level.

Jammers: Jammers work to disrupt enemy sensor systems by sending out powerful signals that can jam and confuse enemy receivers, often times fooling them into thinking the jamming signal is the true signal. The effect of this is to reduce the sensor rating of the ship. The larger the technology gap between the Jammer and the enemy the more pronounced this effect is. Enemy sensors are reduced by 1 point plus the difference between their tech levels. Enemy ships with a higher sensor tech than the mounting ship's overall tech level are not affected by these systems.

Portents

This is the latest installment by Agents of Gaming of the teaser fiction piece depicting the slide towards war in the Turning Point universe.

US Solar Operations HQ, Mars 23 April 2193

DEEP underneath the surface levels of the U.S. Solar Headquarters, hundreds of men and women studied and analyzed streams of data constantly pouring into their computers from across the system. Some simply categorized the various packets of information and diverted them to the appropriate departments within the SolInt department. Others, within each department, began to pick apart the data in an attempt to unveil clues and hints of the moves every known military and para-military organization was making across the system.

Inside the EUOpInt (European Union Operational Intelligence) department, Captain Sarah Conrad was busy studying recent recon data records from the Saturn region when a knock on her door interrupted her. Looking up she saw Lieutenant James Sizemore leaning against the doorframe with his standard lazy grin splayed across his face. He was holding a data chip in his hand.

"Have you taken a look at the recent Saturn passes that arrived last night?"

Glancing at her monitor displaying that very report, she subconsciously scrolled through the data as she answered, "Looking over it now, James. Looks like they've moved a few things around, but nothing really interesting."

James arched an eyebrow at that and smiled.

Sarah suspected he'd noticed something she hadn't. He always donned that smile when he thought he was about to spring something on her. "You haven't looked too closely, have you?"

"I've barely started scanning the prelims in the reports, let alone analyze all the data. I'm assuming by the lopsided grin of yours you've found something interesting."

Walking around her desk, James handed Sarah the data chip in his hand. "Bring this up for me," he asked.

Inserting the chip into the reader, Sarah punched in the appropriate commands. After a few seconds, the imagery from the same recon scan Sarah had been studying appeared and started playing. In the distance the image of Saturn Base, the EU's primary naval base in the solar system, could be seen. Even from this distance, immense amounts of activity could be

seen occurring about it. More distant yet, the massive dockyards that serviced ships for the EU were visible. The yards were large enough to accommodate nearly 40 vessels of various sizes. About half the berths appeared to be occupied. The computer began placing identifying tags on the various vessels in the dock and around the base. Thus far, nothing particularly surprising, though she did notice a significant absence of escort-type vessels that would normally accompany some of the ships in the berths at the moment. While interesting, that fact was hardly something to pull James to her office. There had to be something else.

Glancing at the time, she sighed in exasperation, "Look, I've got a meeting in 15 minutes, Jim. As much as I enjoy our little games, I don't have the time at the moment. Tell me what you've found."

Leaning over, the Lieutenant opened another

file. This one looked similar to the first but had additional notations made by James appearing at various points. "Okay, I've found three things that strike me as somewhat odd. First, as you likely noticed, the normal complement of escort-class ships seems to be missing. This is especially odd since there are two Paris class and one Berlin class berthed at the yard. Where are their escorts?"

"Okay, I agree it's odd their escorts are not around," she informed him. Sarah punched a couple of buttons, and the view focused on the berthed carriers. "Look at this, though. Those carriers are obviously undergoing some major overhauls. They'll be berthed at least the next couple of months by the look of things. Maybe the EU reassigned the escorts in the meantime."

"You know that would be a major departure from doctrine. The EU always overhauls escorts with their charge. If they need escorts elsewhere, they'd pull them from the general pool, not from a carrier's squadron. Here they've pulled the escorts from three carriers, including a fleet carrier."

"Okay, point taken. You said there were three things. What are the others?"

With the entry of a couple more codes, the view on the screen shifted again to another portion of the shipyard complex. "Three years ago, as you'll recall, they added this new section to the yard. We've been trying, unsuccessfully, to figure out what they were building in there. The only thing we know for certain is that it's a mobile unit of some type, since we know they sent transit drive parts in. We've assumed it's a new fleet carrier due to orders they've placed for TD parts and maneuvering engines, but we've never known for certain."

Sarah studied the visual display noting that there was virtually no activity around it. "Looks almost deserted."

"That's the second oddity. For three years that place has been a beehive of activity. Now, all of a sudden, it's nearly deserted. My guess is that our missing escorts are with whatever was in there. That means they consider it extremely important, more so than a fleet carrier. If I'm right, they've assigned nearly three squadrons of escorts to it. I'd give my right arm to know what it was."

Punching some final buttons, James replaced the imagery with several windows of text. "Finally, I've uncovered some odd deployment changes. The list to the left is what we've spotted in the berths at the Saturn yards as well as what we know is in the general region. The list on the right is ships that we thought were a long way from Saturn. Many of them were supposedly inside Earth orbit. However, as you can see, they are not where they're supposed to be, they are at Saturn. Finally, the list at the bottom is ships we've lost. We have no clue where they are at the moment. As you can see, there are enough ships on that list to nearly fill a Task Group. Not knowing where that many ships are scares the hell out of me."

At this point Sarah began calling up some other reports that had filtered across her desk over the last several weeks. While doing so, she asked, "Is what we are seeing here the re-organization we have been hearing rumblings about?"

"It's possible, but I have to wonder about it. None of the ships that are normally stationed in Mars space have moved. If this is part of a reorg, it's a massive one. I seriously doubt an entire fleet would be left out of it. Yet they're operating as if everything is normal."

Holding up a finger Sarah said, "Ah, here it is. Do you remember this report that was forwarded to us by the Brits' MIS department? They forwarded us a notice that a freighter under British flag was lost trailward of Saturn. It had reported a damaged TD system and requested a repair ship be dispatched. It had also dropped its pallets and arranged for pickup by another freighter. When the repair ship and freighter arrived, the only thing they found was a debris cloud. Another debris field was also found a ways off consistent with that of a lifeboat those freighters carry. At the time we assumed they were unlucky enough to be found by pirates first. What if they ran into something else?"

"Like a new ship class the EU wanted kept under wraps. Wanted it secret enough to destroy a civilian freighter so word couldn't leak out about it."

Popping the data chip out of the reader, Sarah stood, "Come with me, you're joining me in my meeting. I know some people who will be interested in hearing about this and your views on it."

May 16th, Harbor Base Jovian System

Admiral Granston furrowed his brows as he studied the latest intel report that had arrived from Mars. Looking over the imagery again, he sighed internally before tossing the data pad back to his yeoman. With barely a movement, Hanson snatched it out of the air.

"Between the empty berths and escorts at Saturn and the unknown locations of at least a dozen other squadrons in the system, intel seems to have lost two entire Euro task groups." Gathering his hands into a small ball, he suddenly opened them up like a magician releasing a pigeon. "Poof, gone! 'Oh, and by the way, we think they have something new floating out there as well. We have no idea, what it might be, or where, or what its capabilities are, or even if it exists, but we thought we ought to tell you.' What the hell do we have intelligence people for?" Glancing up at Hanson, he continued, "Robert, how's the preparations coming?"

Pulling out his own datapad, Yeoman Hanson made a show of punching up the information, though he already knew the status by heart. "The fleet will be ready to depart within a week. We're awaiting the arrival of three flights of Raptors for the Churchill as well as a squadron of Sabertooths for the Eielson. Supply ships have all arrived and our ships are loading them now. The Horton, Queen Mary as well as a dozen oth-

ers are still recalling crew from their alternate duty posts but expect the last of them to arrive over the next 72 hours."

"Excellent, if you would, call in my staff. I want them here in an hour. In addition, call in Captain Portsman from the Ottawa, I need him here as well. Tell the station kitchen to prepare a small buffet for us, delivered around 1930."

"I'll see to it, Admiral." With an acknowledging wave from the Admiral, Robert smartly turned and left. Behind him he heard Sam Granston quietly curse the intelligence report again.

May 16th, Saturn Base, Saturn System

Staring out of the view port, Admiral of the Line Jordan Escalle studied the lines of the destroyer that was floating nearby. It was the Schernaught and had ferried him here. It also waited to ferry him out to the fleet that was gathering trailward of Saturn. A fleet that had begun to gather even before his recall from his cushy job on Mars. Now he prepared the fleet for a task he did not agree with, but which had fallen to him. He shook his head as he recalled the conversation he had had with Councilman Vernoff three weeks ago. The conversation had not gone well. Fear and pride had taken his nation to this point. Jordan simply hoped he could keep it from swallowing the Union. If his plan worked as predicted, he believed he would be able to.

A light knock brought the Admiral out of his reverie and he turned to see his executive officer, Line Admiral Hagi, enter his office. "Gica, how goes things today?"

"Well enough, Admiral. A new intelligence report just arrived. Thought you might like to look it over." Gica handed a datapad to Jordan as he said this. The pad was already active with the report showing on the screen. Jordan studied it and looked up sharply.

"How certain is this?"

"Hard to say, sir. Our contact in the Jovian system has sent a number of reports that would seem to support this, though. There has certainly been a pretty significant amount of activity around Harbor base in the last three weeks to indicate something was happening. If he moved his flag bag to Harbor, though, UNAN has certainly kept it quiet."

"That would be Sam's style. My departure may have rattled him more than I thought. Of course, it rattled me quite a bit."

"Begging your pardon, sir, but weren't you and Admiral Granston friends?"

"Not were, are. And I know you've had your doubts about my perspective and dedication on this whole operation because of it. However, rest assured that one thing the two of us have in common most of all is our loyalty and patriotism. I won't deny that I have my doubts about the intelligence of this operation. The politicians don't seem to believe UNAN has the stomach for a prolonged engagement and they may be right, if everything goes as planned. If not, I think they

may be in for a surprise and we'll have our work cut out for us."

"I meant no disrespect, sir."

"No worry, you have every right and it is your place to be concerned. However, this operation that has been thrust upon me will happen whether or not I choose to command it. At least now I have a say in how it will play out. People are going to die, on both sides. Hopefully I can keep that count down to a minimum and secure the future of our nation. It is those thoughts that keep me going when I start to dwell on what is to come. Let's move on to other subjects. When are the replacement escorts going to arrive for our current yard guests?"

His eyes lingered on his commander a moment longer before bringing up the information requested. It had to be a difficult position to be in - being ordered to plan and execute an operation that could very well end up killing your own best friend had to be difficult. Gica was glad he was not in that position because he didn't know if he would be able to do it himself.

May 16th, Harbor Base, Jovian System

A glowing display hovered between the staff members gathered in Admiral Granston's office showing the solar system from Saturn inward. A number of icons floated in various points, indicating known formations of various nations as well as standard shipping lanes and Oran logistical points. A number of icons, including Saturn's, pulsed brightly, indicating special interest was being paid them.

"As you are all aware by now, our friends in intelligence have lost track of a rather large portion of the Euro fleet. Elements from their interior fleet as well as the bulk of the Saturn fleet are currently unaccounted for. The Mars fleet task force seems to be fully accounted for, that makes it unlikely these missing ships are simply in transit to new posts." Heads shook in agreement around the room.

The Admiral nodded to Yeoman Hanson, and the holoview zoomed in on Saturn. A number of new icons appeared, indicating Saturn Base, the Saturn yard complex, and known European patrols in the region. In addition, a single bright blue icon blinked behind the orbital path of Saturn. It had the designation of CF Dad's Pride underneath it.

"Captain Portsman, this is where you come in. A British freighter, Dad's Pride, was lost trailward of Saturn. It was last heard from in the region indicated in the display. They had indicated their transit drive was down due to a micrometeorite impact. However, when the repair ship and replacement tug arrived, they only found a debris field left behind. Intel thinks they either stumbled across a pirate enclave or, possibly, they stumbled into the missing Euro ships and were destroyed as a result. I want you to take the Ottawa out there and see what you can find. Be careful out there. If its pirates you'll have nothing to worry about. If it was the Euros,

though, they won't likely take your presence kindly since they are killing civilians to keep their location secret. How quickly can you depart?"

"We've just completed load on supplies. We can be on our way within the day."

"Good, there is no reason to keep you here any longer. Godspeed, Captain." Captain Portsman picked up his belongings and left the office. As the door closed, the Admiral continued his meeting with his staff detailing plans for the upcoming exercise.

June 28th, Trailward of Saturn, UNNS Ottawa

Captain Portsman studied the tactical display floating in front of him. He was quietly creeping along at a bare 5,000 kilometers an hour around 150 million kilometers behind Saturn's path. Even at this range, the planet was visible, though only as a small disc larger and brighter than those around it. A secondary display showed the current disposition of the squadron he commanded. Surrounding his Cromwell class Electronic Warfare Cruiser were a single Hamilton Escort Cruiser leading the way and two Cooke Escort Destroyers flanking his ship. All four vessels were running quiet. The sensors of each ship were switched to a passive mode, listening and looking for emissions from any source. Fire control systems were on stand-by. If all went well, they would remain on stand-by for the duration of the mission, as this was a recon sortie, not a combat op.

Thus far, they had been cruising the region for nearly a week. Two days ago, they had found the location of the Dad's Pride. Recovery teams had gathered fragments of the debris and were even now analyzing it in an attempt to determine who had destroyed the ship. More than likely, the efforts would be unsuccessful. Since then, they had been quietly spiraling outward seeing if anything else remained to be seen. His mission called for his remaining in the region for another three days, then making for Harbor base once again.

A quiet chime from one of the nearby stations caused Portsman to glance that direction. The officer at the station punched some commands into the console and the Captain could see a number of figures pop up on his display. Not wishing to seem impatient or overbearing, the Captain quietly waited while Lieutenant Barent digested whatever the computer had brought to her attention. The executive officer, however, was not quite so patient and strolled over to the console. The two quietly exchanged several words before the command looked back towards his Captain.

"Sir, I think we're being shadowed." Without the need of any prompting, the holo display updated itself, tightening itself on the squadron's location. A transparent cone fanned out from the squadron with one band pulsing, indicating approximate origin of the signal source. The

cone on the display indicated the exact source of the signal had not yet been found and the computer was guessing as to its approximate origins. To the side, signal analyzers displayed a number of real-time graphs comparing the faint signal being picked up with normal noise found in space.

"Comms, alert the squadron to a possible contact. Continue Operational Level Delta. Prepare for a course change 20 degrees to port ascendancy of 10 degrees. Commander, begin copying all readings into the drone should we need to launch it. Standard deployment routine. Helm, execute course change in 30 seconds."

Almost as one, the squadron altered its course, cutting across the potential path of the contact if it should be following the squadron. This would allow the range to close and possibly allow for a better contact. The squadron continued coasting on the new heading for another 15 minutes before anything happened. Tensions in the CIC of the Ottawa rose as those minutes dragged on. Suddenly the sensor board lit up, but from an unexpected direction. The sensor officer quickly reported in.

"Captain, I have four contacts, designate them Alphas One through Four. Unable to get a clear reading on them, its almost as though they are only half there. They are definitely heading towards us." The hold display updated itself showing four red glowing icons. Probable paths were also overlaid on the display showing an eventual intercept inside of 15 minutes if neither side altered course or speed. An interception was not what the Captain had in mind.

"Helm, begin standard evasion pattern. Maintain current speed." As the Ottawa began altering its heading in an attempt to avoid the unknown nebulous contacts, the rest of the squadron followed the maneuvers with practiced ease. Even as he watched the display, however, the Captain could see it was not going to be easy, for the four contacts altered their own heading taking up a more direct pursuit stance.

"Sir, contacts have accelerated to allow them to maintain contact but they are not overtaking. Still unable to get clear readings on them but the acceleration curve indicates they are likely frigate class ships."

Picket force, most likely, Portsman thought to himself. Seems they just want to keep us away, not engage us. The question is, who are they, and what are they hiding?

An hour later the pursuers turned back, disappearing from sensors far too quickly for Portsman's liking. Two hours after that, Portsman began working his way back, slowly but steadily.

Twelve hours later, the insistent chiming indicating the bridge was trying to contact him woke the captain. Quickly shaking the sleep away, he spoke. "What have you got, Bridge?"

To be continued…

CRYSTAL TEARS

By DIOGENES

1st Platoon, Spaceport Highway, Yedor, 18.30 hours

Fires started by artillery barrages flickered redly on the crystal spires - bright points of light glowing against the darkening sky. Nightfall was a relief. It hid the scars of civil war - buildings pockmarked by shell bursts, mangled wrecks of skycars and flyers, and black plumes of smoke

Patrol-leader Lennius coughed, the thick acrid smoke eddying through the room burnt deeply into his lungs. He rubbed his watering eyes and uttered a short prayer, asking for relief.

But there was nowhere to go to escape the smoke. The whole city seemed on fire.

Lennius stooped and scuttled over to where one of his squad lay prone, scanning the nearby hills with his binoculars.

He was positioned at the top of a severely shelled tower. From the debris strewn on the floors, Lennius could tell this had once been a civil engineering centre. Now, it was so severely battered and scarred that the besieging Warrior

> "When I was a child, my father used to carry me through the city on his shoulders. I'd never seen such beauty. The city was eternal, beauty was eternal. I think of my beautiful city in flames. The streets where I walked. The Temples. The great crystal spires which sighed music whenever the wind touched them. I think of it, and I cry Lennier."
>
> - Delenn

Caste had stopped lobbing shells at it. That made it an ideal vantage point from which to observe the terrain around the sacred city.

Spread out on the ground alongside him was a tourist map of the city. Scrawled in red in the hills surrounding it were the latest known positions of Warrior Caste

forces. Smaller patches of blue showed where the Religious Caste was assembling the remnants of its own militia.

Lennius reviewed the defensive positions. It was a hopeless situation. They simply did not have enough soldiers to cover all the approaches to the city. Yedor was a jungle of crystal apartment blocks, stores and other high-rise buildings. Broad lines-of-sight were next to impossible to find.

Rhi Company was positioned in a cluster of buildings on the southwestern boundaries of Yedor, overlooking the main approaches from the nearby spaceport. The gravtrains were not operational. The breaks in the slender crystal chain that linked the spaceport to the city were clear testimony to that. All that was left now was the ancient highway beneath it.

Lennius's second-in-command, Lintyre, and the 3rd Platoon were guarding the highway's right flank from a 30-storey apartment building. It provided the best views of that area.

The 2nd Platoon was in a central position, hidden among the debris either side of the highway - waiting in ambush.

Lennius's own platoon was in the lower floors of the same tower he was watching from, covering the left flank.

Other cobbled together militia companies were stretched to either side across the city - an assortment of police officers, security guards, volunteer civilians, monks and a smattering of light infantry. All were worn down by weeks of fighting. First it had been street violence, then riots… then open warfare… now bombardment. Soon, there would be an assault.

Lennius rubbed his eyes wearily. Intelligence about the Warrior Caste's forces was pathetic. All they seemed to know was that it was mechanised infantry, possibly in multi-battalion strength. Sounded like wild guesses to Lennius.

But there was no doubt they would be outnumbered. Probably by more than five to one. Not taking into account the almost complete imbalance in armour…

All they could do was wait…

1st Platoon, Spaceport Highway, Yedor, 20.30 hours

"Patrol Leader?" the prone scout alongside Lennius whispered, his hand to the commlink at his ear. "3rd Platoon reports tanks and infantry moving along the highway. Company strength." He paused, listening. "Two has detected movement also"

Wind whistled through the shattered crystal walls. The long anticipated assault had begun. It seemed unnaturally quiet. That would shortly change, Lennius knew.

"They want to know what to do."

Lennius breathed deeply, and slithered closer to the window. "Tell them to stay where they are and keep out of sight." He lifted himself slightly, bringing his eyes over the blackened crystal glass. "Remind them not to fire until I give the word."

"Yes sir." The infantryman began whispering softly into his microphone.

Despite his high vantage point, Lennius heard the Warrior Caste's forces before he saw them. The soft whine of gravitic engines slowly built up above the gentle wind. Then he heard the pulse of marching feet. Finally, shapes appeared at the edge of his sight.

Lennius lifted his hand, his communication's officer watching him intently.

Then, something happened.

Warrior Caste foot soldiers scattered off the highway into the buildings. A mere 30 seconds more, and he would have been able to spring his trap!

But the gods were seemingly not with the Religious Caste today.

Suddenly, the whine of weapons fire and the thud of small arms impacts broke through the dusk

"3rd Platoon reports contact."

Lennius shook his head in frustration. But before he could issue his next command, a cacophony of noise ripped through the streets. Artillery. Fusion rifles. Gravnades and Neutron Cannons all seemed to erupt into life at once.

He risked another look out the window, quickly ducking back.

The Warrior Caste infantry may have sought shelter inside nearby buildings. But three of their Crystalis fighting vehicles sat in the middle of the highway, their turrets swinging back and forth.

Lennius knew those fighting vehicles had to be neutralised. But how?

The TalFalni Assault Gun was usually next to useless against frontal armour… but when fired from an upper-storey vantage point they could just penetrate the thinner top armour…

Lennius got up and clattered down the office tower's central stairway. As he ran, he heard his platoon cut loose.

Too late.

With a wild roar, the soldiers opened fire as Warrior Caste infantry burst through into the empty ground floor lobby…

It had been Lennius' last line of defence: keeping the bulk of his soldiers on the first floor and clear of the main entrances - setting up the lobby as a "kill zone". But how did the Warrior Caste penetrate that far so quickly?

KARMMMPP! The building shook violently. The Crystalis fighting vehicles were supporting their infantry.

Lennius pushed through a door on the third floor, startling the section of militia in the room.

"Quickly, get them before they shoot again!"

Several militia pushed their assault gun up to the shattered window. But the tanks were already gone.

A soldier rushed into the room holding a comlink. "3rd Platoon, Sir!"

"Casualties?" Lennius barked into the mouthpice.

"Heavy." A crashing sound came from earpiece. "They're using gravnades against our positions."

"Can you hold?"

"For a little while."

1st Platoon, Spaceport Highway, Yedor, 21.30 hours

Huddled in a pocked doorway, Patrol-leader Lennius stared in shock at the scattered flesh and bones lining what was once the office tower's lobby.

The ragged Religious Caste militia platoon had just managed to repulse another attack. But could they do it again?

The 2nd Platoon had been over-run by

THE BLOOD PRICE

Delenn's gambit to end the Minbari Civil War was an extraordinarily risky one. It relied on one thing, and one thing only: the integrity of Neroon of the Warrior Caste.

The relationship between Neroon and Delenn had not been an amicable one. In recent years the pair had often stared each other down over one diplomatic incident or another.

But out of that adversity grew a strong respect.

Agreeing to disagree, both remained committed to their beliefs and convictions.

Now, Delenn had to rely on Neroon's loyalty in the Minbari race over and above that of his own Warrior Caste. Neroon was to prove worthy of that trust in a way Delenn never anticipated.

But the risk was real, nevertheless. To achieve her desired outcome, Delenn deliberately allowed Neroon to leak Religious Caste plans for a counter-attack on the capital of Yedor.

With that knowledge, the Warrior Caste was certain to win the battle.

It knew that a feigned retreat would draw the Religious Caste's forces into Yedor. Once there, the Warrior Caste was able to encircle and beseige them.

It was a horrible price. Delenn must have known that she had sealed the fate of hundreds, if not thousands, of Minbari lives.

But the gambit was based on instilling a sense of overconfidence in Warleader Shakiri. Only through his bravado could the Warrior Caste be manipulated into accepting the trial by fire under the Starfire Wheel.

Delenn knew one thing: that she was willing to die for her people.

She suspected, probably supported by Neroon's analysis, that Shakiri was a despot hungry only for power.

If his true character could only be exposed... If the power of tradition could end the war...

The price was to be the lives of the defenders of Yedor.

It was a price Delenn was willing to pay.

Warrior Caste tanks swarming down the highway. A few battered survivors had made it to the tower. No word had come from the 3rd Platoon for almost an hour. They must have fallen.

Lennius felt wrecked. His uniform was ripped and he had a jagged cut over his head.

He scanned the scene again. Most of the lower floor's crystal walls were gone. Ripped from their mountings by grav-nades and cannons. There were no longer any clearly defined approach routes to defend.

Only a third of the men Lennius had led into the tower were still alive. Every inch of their clothing and faces were covered in black soot. But their eyes still shone in tired determination.

KAARRUMP! A nearby explosion shook the tower. More explosions came in rapid succession.

Another attack. So soon?

"Attack, north!" The shout over the comlink was desperate.

Lennius gestured to the troops about him and ran down the hall. This was proof that the 3rd Platoon had fallen. His position had been outflanked. The Warrior Caste was attacking from behind.

Shots echoed down the corridor. Close.

An explosion followed.

Lennius made a quick decision. "Get everyone still alive to the third floor. We'll cover the staircases."

He tried to sound confident. But he knew that going up was to cut his platoon off from any chance of escape.

A handful of men followed him onto the third floor. Artillery hits in the preceding weeks had opened great rents in the floors - provided vantage points over the stairways from above. Quickly the militia flattened themselves on the floor, ignoring the sharp crystal shards and tilting their rifles towards the staircase.

"Grenade," a soldier screamed. Lennius threw himself sideways and flattened against the ground. Fragments whined past his ears.

"Anyone hit?" he barked.

Soldiers coughed in the dust-filled air. Two were dead. That left five.

"Patrol Leader." The soldiers voice was dry and breaking, but surprise showed clearly in his eyes. It was his communications officer. Lennius was mildly surprised to see him still alive.
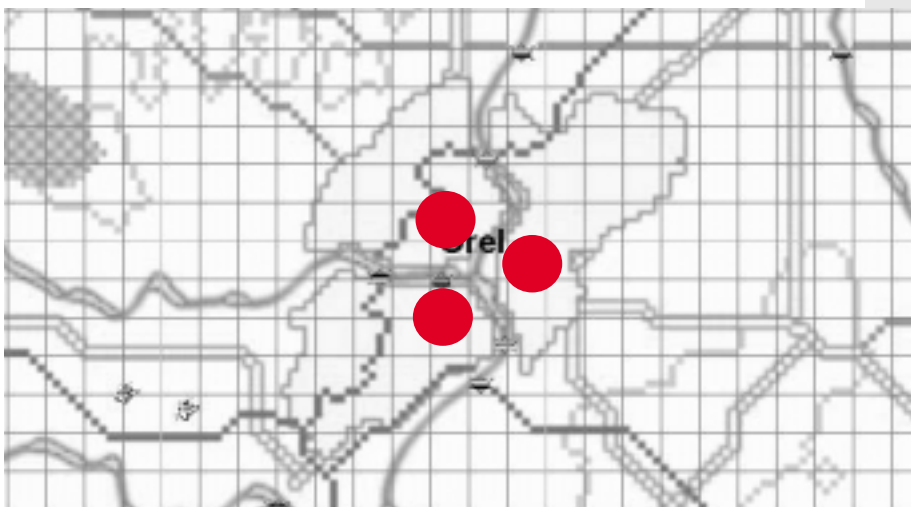
"Message from the Clan Council and Delenn. It's a general surrender order, sir!"

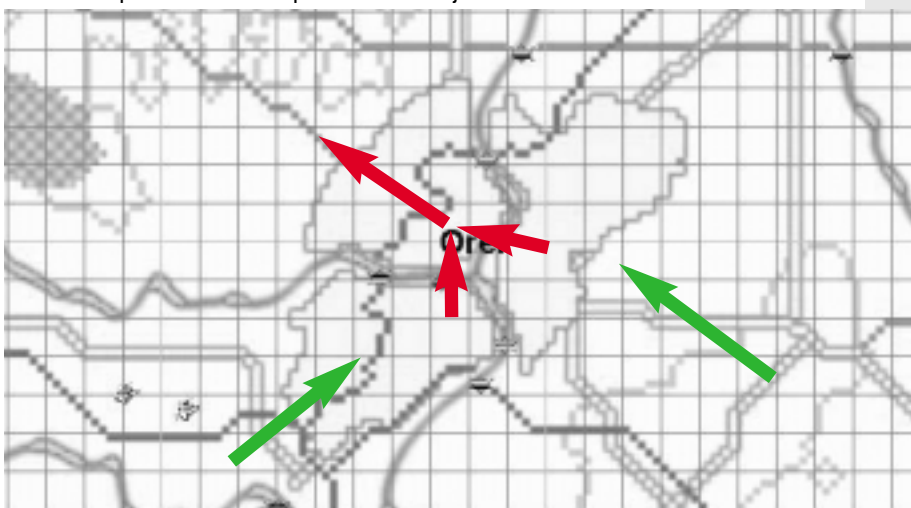Lennius saw the grenade bounce off the wall and roll towards him.
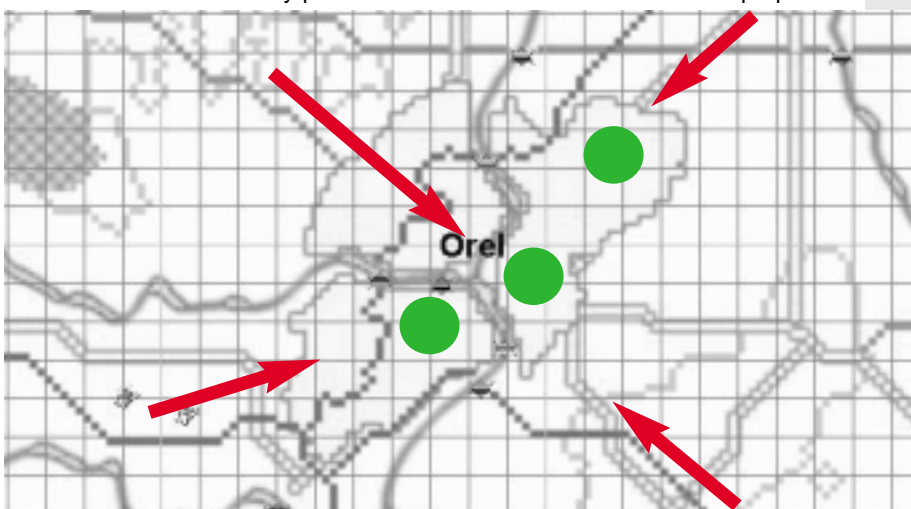
He reached for it.

It exploded.

**Assault Team One,
Spaceport Highway, Yedor,**

Yedor's three sectors, Religious, Warrior and Worker, are placed under marital law. A large detachment of Warrior Caste troops drawn from bases in the surrounding countryside is positioned at key locations within these sectors. Nominally there to help enforce the peace, the troops soon abandon all pretence of independence and join the vicious street battles.
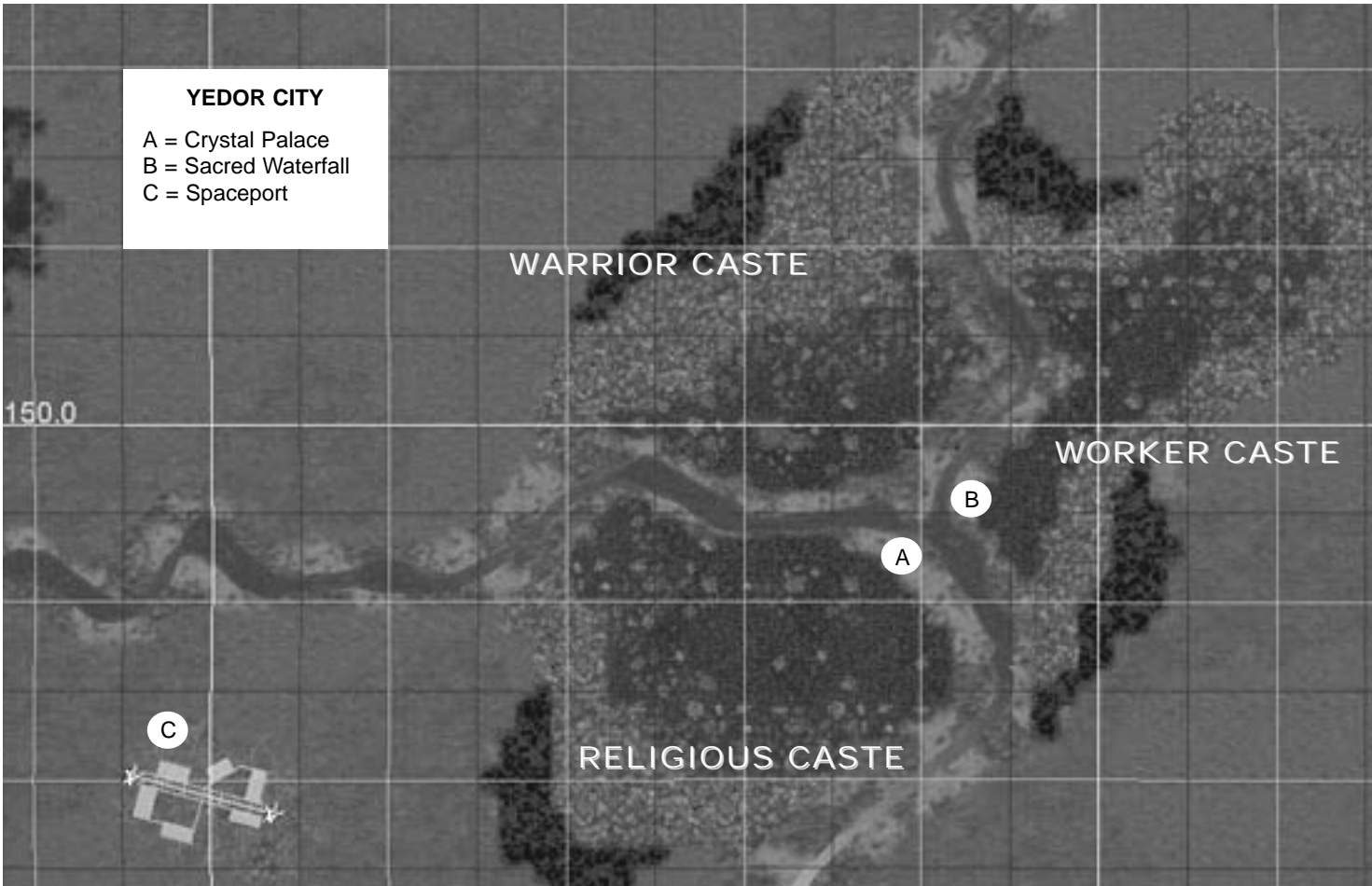

Delenn's arrival at the Minbari capital empties the streets of combatants from all three sides. The Warrior caste appears to retreat from the advancing Religious caste, fighting only rear-guard actions. Seemingly unaware of a trap, Delenn's forces begin to fortify themselves in the city. But Neroon's double, double cross has already provided Shakiri with the time needed to prepare.

The Warrior caste's counter-attack is swift and vicious. The Religious caste is trapped within the crystal city before it is able to establish an outer perimeter. Pre-positioned forces relieve the evicted Warrior caste militia. Tanks and artillery are moved to the high points around the city. All roads are blocked and a strict no-fly zone enforced. A relentless bombardment begins.

YEDOR CITY

A = Crystal Palace
B = Sacred Waterfall
C = Spaceport

WARRIOR CASTE

150.0

WORKER CASTE

B

A

C

RELIGIOUS CASTE

21.50 hours

Force leader So'Han used the tip of his boot to roll the dead Religious Caste officer over. He choked at the sight.

"Force Leader?"

He looked up. A squad-leader was standing nearby. "We killed them all sir. The building is clear. The highway is open."

So'Han nodded. "Our losses?"

"Section leaders report no further casualties, sir".

So'Han sank to his knees.

"You okay Force Leader?"

"No. These people fought bravely. It makes it all the worse knowing they were our people…

"Contact the Field-Marshall. Let them know we have secured the sector."

The squad-leader looked at his commander carefully for a moment, then saluted. "Yes sir."

"And squad-leader, remind everyone that War Leader Shakiri has accepted the Religious Caste's surrender. That means there will be no more killing. No exceptions."

The squad-leader hesitated. "Yes sir."

So'Han closed his eyes, listening to the squad-leader's boots clacking down the stairs.

They'd won.

But at what price?

***

RELIGIOUS CASTE MILITIA

By BEN RUBERY

STRUCTURE
1 Command Group, 2-4 platoons
2-4 Infantry platoons
0-1 AFV platoon
0-1 APC platoon
0-2 Support elements

Command Group
1x Vision Command Tank 24/48/72/--
1x Standard Infantry   7/14/21/--

Infantry Platoon
(total 8 stands per platoon)
4-8 Standard Infantry 7/14/--/--
0-2 Veteran infantry (as standard infantry but with veteran status) 21
0-1 Tal'Falni 9/18/--/--

AFV Platoon
1-3 Foltia AFVs 34/67/--/--

APC Platoon
1-3 Crystalis IFV 31/62/--/--

Support elements
Recon - 1 or 2 Recon stands at 8/16/--/--
Airstrike - always combat flyer 100

Notes
I've set out to construct a company organization table that reflects the ad-hoc nature of the Religious Castes efforts to defend themselves during the civil war. The Religious Caste had no real experience of war, least of all ground combat, having left fighting to the Warrior Caste and concentrated on the traditional pursuits of the Religious Caste. This is represented on the chart by the almost complete absence of veteran troops and the total absence of elites.

The Religious Caste will not have access to virtually any types of Minbari armored vehicle, and so have exceedingly poor anti-armor capabilities, relying only on Foltias and the Crystalis IFVs to take on Warrior Caste Shriek MBTs. The Religious Caste is simply no match for the Warrior Caste in terms of training or equipment and this list reflects that.

However it allows players to construct companies to represent the desperate formations the Religious Caste tried to use to defend their temples and monasteries.

Storming the
TEMPLE

By JJ O'SHAUGHNESSY

<u>SCENARIO:</u> BEGINNING OF THE WAR.

The Minbari Civil War began when all members of the Religious Caste were driven into Minbar's northern wastes from one of the northern cities. The Warriors stopped short of killing them (Valen's law is still holding some force), but to the Religious Caste it was an open act of murder, as no-one could survive for long in the arid, freezing wastes. In desperation, the Religious Caste attempted a rescue mission from orbit. The Warriors had not expected such a bold move from the Religious Caste, but had stationed a Patrol Cruiser in orbit to monitor the situation.

Set-up
One map, situated just outside the atmosphere of Minbar. Designate one short edge as the atmosphere

Forces
Warrior
Tigarin Patrol Cruiser Valen's Wrath. This ship is at patrol stations (see rules p 170 RC). Fighters (Nials) not deployed. Begins within 4 hexes of the planet's atmosphere, speed 0.

Religious
3 Torotha Assault Frigates.
1 Leshath Scout Eye of Minbar with 6 Nials.
1 Ashinta Close Escort Shield of Tolis.

These enter from the top end of the map, speed no greater than 8.

Special rules
The Torothas are trying to enter the atmosphere and rescue as many Religious as they can. They are fully loaded with Assault Flyers. After entering the atmosphere (must be at or below speed 8) they will emerge in 3 turns from anywhere along the map edge (speed 6) and attempt to flee the map from the top end. If a Torotha is destroyed, use the "fighters escaping from a destroyed ship" rules to determine if any flyers escape. The flyers will attempt to complete the Torotha's mission (The Religious will be loaded into the flyers as a precaution). The Torothas will only fire in their own defense (defined as interception or anti-fighter fire) and are of course permitted to shut down any weapons necessary for extra EW or thrust. They may also launch the flyers if they are at 50% structure or less.
The Religious see the Warriors as murderers and have no compunction about firing on the Warrior ship. The Warriors can only fire after 1 turn has passed.
In addition to the patrol rules, the Warrior ship is not at full readiness. When you are rolling for each weapon, a result of 1 means that the weapon is unmanned and must activate according to the cruise rules, rolling on turn 2 at the 7+ result

The Victory is determined by how many flyers manage to escape (each Torotha contains 2 flyers)
5-6 Religious victory
4 draw
0-3 Warrior victory

Historical outcome
The Warriors were shocked by the appearance of battle ready Religious ships. They soon recovered however and the range advantage of the Warrior ship began to tell. Despite the frantic attempts of the scout to protect the Torothas, 2 of them were destroyed, and only a total of 4 flyers managed to escape. Enraged, the Religious ships drew alongside the Warrior ship and blew it to smithereens.

The war had begun.

SCENARIO: BELOW THE BELT

Enraged by the bold action of the Religious Caste, the Warriors planned a demoralizing blow against them. They decided to strike at the important Religious retreat of Al-Shaner, located in the Ralafa system in the heart of the Federation. In addition, this system was an important hub in the jump routes network and controlling that system would split the Federation in half. The Religious spotted this base as a likely target, however, and they realized that they could not muster enough forces to hold the base against a determined attack, at least not in the amount of time they believed they had. So they began evacuating the base. This evacuation was nearly complete when the Warriors arrived...

Set-up

Religious Caste.
Al-Shaner Station at 2215. A modified Centauri Marcanos Civilian Base can represent this. Replace all Twin Arrays with Fusion Cannon, and fill the hanger bays with Nials. Add +5 power to represent the deactivated Jammer. Increase the Base's sensors to 8 (16 total). Base rotation at player's discretion.
Jump gate at 0404. The gate has 6 turns to go before a Jump point can be formed.
5 Retlata Transports within 4 hexes of the Jumpgate, speed 0.
1 Ashinta Close Escort within 5 hexes of the base, speed 0.
1 Sharlin in hex 1605 facing 4, speed 3. This ship is on patrol stations (P170 RC)

Warrior Caste.
1 Shargoti Battle Cruiser (loaded with Nials) and a Sharaal War Cruiser (loaded with Tishats) enter on turn 1 from the 44xx hex row, speed 5. These ships are at full battle stations.
2 Tinashis enter from a jump point (target 0610, facing 1) on turn 3. These ships may begin with weapons sustained if desired.

Special rules.
No ship is permitted to fire on the jump gate in this scenario.

Victory conditions

Religious
The base survives: tactical victory.
The base survives and 4 Retlatas escape. : Total victory
Lose base but 4 or more Retlatas escape : Marginal victory.
Sink the Shargoti : Automatically win.
Any other result is a loss

Warrior Caste
How dare these Vorlon worshipping saps stand up to your might? Show them your superiority by denying them their victory conditions!

Historical outcome
The Sharlin moved to engage the Warrior ships, fighters pouring from its hanger bay. However, as the battle was joined, the Tinashis jumped in behind it and stared cutting the transports to pieces. The transports turned to fight however and one of the Tinashis was eventually destroyed, the other heavily damaged, 3 transports giving their lives so the others could flee. The Sharaal moved serenely through the swarms of fighters and began to rip the base apart with its Converters. In a classic David and Goliath match up the Sharlin and Shargoti fought a lone duel amid the carnage, the Ashinta desperately fighting to save the base. Warrior Caste records show that the Warleader on board the Shargoti was visibly taken aback by the courage and skill of the Sharlin crew as they desperately attacked again and again. Laser and cannon fire ripped into its hull as the Gravity Nets threw it aside, but they still kept coming. The Sharlin eventually crippled the Shargoti, but the result of the battle was almost a forgone conclusion. The explosion of the base joined the Sharlin's detonation.
The Warriors held the field, the Ashinta vanishing into a jump point with the few remaining fighters.

Aftermath:
The Warriors were in a perfect position to blockade the system, and prevent the Religious from bringing reinforcements to Minbar. However a new side was about to make their presence felt...
The Shargoti quit the field and was not seen again on the side of the Warriors for the duration of the war, its Captain and crew having lost their taste for Religious Caste blood. After the war they joined the Anla'Shok to a man.

SCENARIO: THE PRICE OF NEUTRALITY

The Warriors were consolidating their hold on Ralafa, and the Religious were building up their fleets to try to smash open this vital junction point and reinforce their forces at Minbar. The scene was set for a horrendous clash between the two huge fleets. Before this could occur, however, the ships of the Workers appeared around each jump point along the most strategic jump routes, carrying OSATs via tractor beams. They declared that they would not see the Federation get ripped apart from within by the other's intransigence. They would keep the jump routes open, and for the use of all. With that they proceeded to fortify the jump routes and began a constant vigilance
Both sides were shocked. Both had not even considered the Workers in their hatred. Both now saw their folly, as the Worker Caste forces were quite formidable. The Warriors realized that with the jump routes open, their hold on Ralafa was of very limited value. The Religious fleet could simply jump through the system

By JJ O'SHAUGHNESSY (Archangel)
THIS Variant was mentioned in the fluff for the Molecular Pulsar in the Core rulebook, but the variant was never published by AOG. While some might say that the variant is useless (I would say it has its uses) I feel it is an important historical variant that should be seen. In any case, it fits what the religious caste might do with their ships (as shown by the Ashinta Close Escort), but should be considered uncommon even in their fleet.

Minbari Sharoth Diplomatic Cruiser
Encouraged by captured examples of Pulse weapons operated by the younger races, the Minbari developed their own Pulse weapons just prior to the Earth-Minbari war, refitting a few Sharlin-class cruisers to test their prototypes. However, as these replaced the more effective and longer ranged Neutron Lasers, they did not prove popular. The Minbari shelved the project at that point, as they had little need to develop a brand new ship class just to employ the technology.

The Religious Caste, however, appropriated the refitted ships. Having no need for conflict, they still had need of a large ship from time to time, and liked the defensive options that this ship provided. They used the extra power and space provided by removing the heavy weapons to increase the capacity of the engine and sensors. Otherwise they did not change a great deal of the basic design, and it was well able to defend itself in the knife fights that it sometimes found itself in.

The ships were typically used in dealings with other races (particularly the Minbari Protectorate) where a sense of power without a sense of threat was very useful, hence the 'Diplomatic' tag. Delenn herself is said to have used one as her flagship during her time as a member of the Grey Council. In combat however they typically were used as heavy escorts for important ships, where their greater maneuverability and sensors were of great help.

It has to be said however that in a sense the Religious Caste shot themselves in the foot with this ship. The ships and crews fought well, but they simply were not capable of standing up to the Sharlin fielded by the Warrior Caste during the Minbari Civil War.

from one gate to another. They could destroy the communication relays to disrupt coordinated movements, but aside from that there was little to be done without fighting the Worker Caste as well as the Religious, a prospect even the Warriors balked at.

Some Warriors, of course, were eager for personal glory, and a chance to have a crack at the weak and feeble Worker Caste was just the thing. Convinced that all it would take would be one good attack and the Workers would lose their resolve, they launched a totally unsanctioned attack on a jump point in Solta Gan. (At least the Warrior Caste would always claim it was unsanctioned...)

By coincidence, a Religious delegation was at the jump gate attempting to start negotiations with the Worker Caste. The Worker commander had just told the Religious speaker exactly where she could shove her 'Special Treaty of Friendship' when the Warriors attacked...

Historical Notes. Just as the Warrior ships were exiting Hyperspace to proceed with this attack, they received a stand down order. The Religious Caste had surrendered, and the Warrior leader had been defeated in a battle of wills by Delenn and Neroon in the Chamber of Stars. This battle is presented as a "What if" scenario.

Set-up

Worker
Jump gate in 2108. This gate is fully charged
Sheganna OSAT in Hexes 2106, 2307, 2309, 2110, 1907, 1909
Retlata Transport (with Sheganna OSAT held in a tractor beam) within 2 hexes of the jump gate
3 Shaveen Patrol Cutters and 1 Shaveen Police Leader within 6 hexes of the jump gate
1 Retlata Transport, hex 2208 facing towards the gate.
3 Tinashis and 1 Esharan Anti-fighter Frigate (loaded with Nials) within 3 hexes of the gate.
1 Sharlin, hex 1709 Facing 1 (These were negotiating with the Religious Caste). 12 of its fighters (Nials) are deployed within 2 hexes of the ship.
6 Minefield hexes are scattered within 6 hexes of the Jump gate (do not reveal to the other players). These will ignore any Worker ship and the Religious if the Worker player wishes to set them as such. He may change this status at the beginning of each round (players are encouraged to have a particular piece of paper for the Worker to note this down on, and this can be inspected at the end of the game)

Religious
Sharoth Diplomatic Cruiser, Hex 1705, facing 4. This ship has no fighters. Also, it is at its first turn of jump recharge as a show of good faith (Gotta love the diplomats, eh?)
White Star within 2 hexes of the Sharoth, but no closer to any Worker unit than the Sharoth.

Like the Sharoth its jump drive is partially discharged and it will be ready to jump in 9 turns.

Warrior
The Warrior player deploys his forces along one short edge of the map after all other forces have been deployed. Speed 6. These ships may begin with weapons sustained if desired.

The Warriors who planned this raid were hampered by the fact that they had no access to the heavy Sharlin cruisers (or, if you were more suspicious the Caste leaders didn't want to risk valuable ships in this chancy raid). However, the force they had was still quite formidable
2 Tigarin Patrol cruisers (with Nials)
3 Tigara Cruisers (with Tishats)
2 Tinashi War Frigates.
1 Shantavi Heavy Battle Frigate (captured from a Religious convoy a few days ago). This ship has taken damage and is not fully repaired. Apply a 30-point rake to the front and 20 to the rear. Do not roll for criticals for this damage.
3 Torothas loaded with Breaching Pods. They each have 4 extra contingents of marines aboard.

Victory Conditions.

Worker
Drive off the Warrior Caste with or without the Religious help. Power to the people!

Warrior.
Destroy all the OSATs and destroy or drive off the Worker Caste ships. If you manage to kill the Religious Caste ships as well, you achieve Total victory. Killing the Religious ships ensures you a marginal loss no matter what else happens. Capturing one of them will actually grant you a victory...

Religious
Better start praying, as you are in deep trouble here. To win you must enter Hyperspace with the Sharoth (if the White Star escapes as well your victory is total). Unfortunately, your drives are offline, and the only way out for the moment is through the Worker Caste. Time to get those diplomatic skills into operation...

Special notes. Any unit within 2 hexes can activate the Jump Gate.

SCENARIO: A TWO LAYERED TRAP...

ONE of the things that made the Minbari civil war so vicious was the fact that the quality of the commanders on both sides was exceptional. Though the Warrior Caste was loath to admit it, the more military elements of the Religious Caste were nearly the equal of the commanders on the other side. The Warrior's edge was numbers, and the fact that the Warriors took battle preparation as their life's work (The Shadow war, however, had gone a long way to evening

up the levels of battle experience). Their tactical mastery was so closely matched, however, that sometimes both sides outsmarted each other.

Take this example. War is won on supply, and the Minbari know that as well as anyone. So both sides had raiders hunting down the other's supply ships. Both sides devised ways of tempting those raiding ships into a trap. Of course, the Minbari can smell a trap from 500 paces, so sometimes each side's outthinking the other got a little out of control...

Setup: 2 map sheets placed side by side.
(Religious Caste sets up first) 3 Retlata transports on one corner any speed up to 6. 1 Sharoth Diplomatic cruiser anywhere within 5 hexes of a Retlata, speed 5. This is fully loaded with Tishats. Up to half the fighters may be deployed with a speed no greater than 10.

Turn 1: [The trap springs..] (Warrior Caste) 1 Sharlin and 2 Tinashis jump in after seeing his opponent's deployment. The jump point may be placed no closer than 30 hexes from enemy ships. The Sharlin has 3 flights of Nials and one of Tishats. These can begin deployed if the player wishes.

Turn 3: [The Trap Revealed!] (Religious Caste) 3 Ashintas, 1 Sharlin and a Leshath jump in anywhere within 25 hexes of the Sharoth. All ships are loaded with 3 flights of Nials and 2 of Tishats. Up to half of them can be deployed.

Turn 5: [We knew it was a trap!] (Warrior Caste) 1 Shargoti, 3 Tinashis, a Tigara and 3 Torothas jump in anywhere no closer than 15 hexes of an enemy ship. All ships are loaded with Nials. These are not yet deployed. The Torothas are loaded with breaching pods. One ship has a flyer with an expert pilot.

Turn 7: [We knew that you knew it was a trap!] (Religious Caste) 1 Sharlin, 1 Sharoth, 3 White Stars and a Tinashi jump in anywhere on the table. The ships have 4 flights of Nials and 4 of Tishats, distributed at the owner's preference. 2 flights can be deployed on entry.

Victory conditions: Kill them all or force them to withdraw. Don't you love simplicity?
If any of the Retlatas manage to escape to the other side of the map (not bloody likely...) the Religious victory increases by one level.

Historical outcome: In a confused action all ships were badly mauled. There was one confirmed case of friendly fire as a late arriving Warrior caste Tinashi was Alpha-striked by the Sharlin as it exited its jump point. There was probably a lot more however. The Retlatas ran for it and one actually managed to escape (possibly by jettisoning over half its escape pods and crew for *cough* extra weight...)

* * *

By RICHARD LECLERCQ
(Hardlec)

Religious Caste Unit Organizations

RELIGIOUS Caste troops have two primary Functions: Ceremony and Security. In Ceremony, the troops wear ancient uniforms and frequently carry pikes, not modern weapons. The vehicles are in bright livery, not camouflage, and are intended to look good on the parade ground. In security, the troops of the Religious Caste are trained to defeat spies, thieves and assassins. There are times when military action is needed, and when that occurs the light Religious Caste troops can strike fast and hard. Military Police units can also pacify an area. During the Civil War, troops of the Religious Caste fought with the Warrior Caste, a task they were never designed to carry out.

Force Structure

Sharisets are composed of 3 elisets and a headquarters section of a Vision and 2 Fire Sprites. Each Fire Sprite carries a gravidere stand. There are Rapid Response Sharisets (qv) as well as sharisets of mobile and mechanized Infantry in various configurations. Two Mobile Infantry Elisets and one Mechanized Infantry Eliset is by far the most common, although it is not unusual to find other combinations, and occasionally there are sharisets of 2 infantry elisets and a Rapid Response Set or a Light Armor Eliset.

Rapid Response Eliset

The Rapid Response Eliset is the second most common military unit employed by the Religious Caste. Fire Sprites are used to escort the Vision Command Vehicle for the shariset and elitset (battalion and regiment). Rapid Response Elisets are typically combined to form Rapid Response Sharisets, although occasionally 2 Rapid Response Elisets will be combined with a Light Armor Set to form a shariset.

FIGHTING for the FAITH

Military Police units use Garrison Infantry Elisets, equipped with Crystalis IFVs. These are common units, but they are rarely organized into sharisets or higher echelon units, except for administration and logistical purposes.

Light Armor Eliset

A Light Armor Eliset consists of: a Command Group with a Vision and Foltia, and 3 Sets of 3 Foltias. This is an uncommon unit, designed to hit and run when the enemy has heavy armor. The Light Armor Elisets are usually combined with 2 other elisets to form a shariset, but there are sharisets of 3 sets of light armor.

Mechanized Infantry Eliset

A Mechanized Infantry Eliset consists of the following: A Command Group with a Vision, a Crystalis and 2 Gravidere infantry stands, and 3 Sets of either 3 Crystalis and 6 stands of infantry, or 6 stands of Jump infantry. Rarely, there will be 2 Sets of the above and one Set of 3 Foltias.

Mobile Infantry Eliset

A Mobile Infantry Eliset consists of: A Command Group with a Jump Command stand and 2 stands of Jump Gravidere, and 3 Sets of 6 stands of jump infantry. Each set is made up of 4 stands of Jump Assault infantry and 2 stands of Jump Gravidere. Jump Gravidere stands are as gravidere stands, but have a movement of 6. The cost is as Infiltrator (12/24/36/54). The Jump Command stand is nearly identical to a Jump Recon stand, except it is the eliset commander; its position dictates the locus for unit cohesion and its loss has morale and command consequences. This is the most common military configuration of Religious Caste troops. It is quite impressive to see a battalion of troops in ancient ceremonial uniforms floating in parade. The Warrior Caste can compose elisets of all jump infantry, but they do not, and they would use Vision vehicles. In addition to ceremonial functions, the Mobile Eliset can be transported to the combat zone very quickly, much like the strategic mobility of 20th century Earth Paratroops.

Force Dispersion

Each Sect of the Religious Caste has a shariset of the following: A Command Group with 1 Vision and 2 Fire Sprites (carrying Jump Recon Stands) and 3 elisets of 2 Windsword HATs and one Star Rider HAT, with 6 stands of Assault infantry. These Heavy Sharisets are used mainly in processions to induct a new Sati, or to be a funeral procession. In combat, they were very effective while they lasted.

The Religious Caste has the same support elements as the Warrior Caste, but has no formal structure except that no unit may have 2 or more of the same support elements. Only shariset and elitset commanders may call for orbital support, if it is available.

* * *

Extraction: digging diplomats out of a civil war hot zone

By Diogenes

CONCERNED by the support the Babylon 5 separatists had been receiving from Ambassador Delenn, President Clark resolved to send a high-level diplomatic mission to Minbar.

It was a desperate attempt to isolate Captain Sheridan and the mutineers rallying to his cause.

Intelligence reports made President Clarke aware of the growing divisions in Minbari society. He felt he could exploit this to his advantage. If his diplomats could win the support of the Warrior Caste, the Religious Caste would be forced to back down.

Or so President Clarke hoped.

Unfortunately, his intelligence sources had no idea just how close to flash point Minbar was.

The Earth delegation sought to exploit this tension. But, unwittingly, it served only to add fuel to the smouldering hatred.

Barely three days after Earth Force Two entered orbit above Minbar, news reached the capital, Yedor, of the death of thousands of Religious Caste in the southern wastes.

Tensions boiled over.

Anxious marines were barely able to usher their politician charges back to their compound before riots spilled into the diplomatic districts.

Efforts to evacuate the envoy via shuttle failed. Yedor had been declared a no-fly zone. Without appropriate permission, the shuttles from Earth Force One would be shot down.

All initial attempts to contact the appropriate Minbari officials failed. Minbari Warrior Caste troops flooded the streets, displaying absolute intolerance for any non-Minbari. Fortunately, they saved their murderous brutality for their own Religious Caste.

But as law and order broke down, the Earth Ambassador realised they were at real risk from the simmering hatred among many Warrior Caste left over from the Earth-Minbari war.

The situation in the diplomatic compound rapidly grew worse.

Even a few Interstellar Alliance tourists heard of the relative sanctuary of the diplomatic compound. Soon, the dozen or so politicians found their ranks tripled by desperate refugees.

Hundreds of Minbari civilians also attempted to seek sanctuary in the compound. But Earth Gov refused them entry.

Eventually, the hundreds of desperate Religious and Worker civilians that had gathered in the surrounding streets were rounded up by the Warrior Caste and herded away.

Occasional grenade attacks were made on the compound's walls. These were invariably followed up by apologies from Warrior Caste commanders for the "provocative" acts of the Religious Caste, which they said was trying to draw Earth into the war.

Rumors of a Religious Caste counter-attack quickly grew. So did the Warrior Caste presence. Soon dozens of troops surrounded the facility.

Star Rider commanders began insisting the compound be opened so troops could enter for the diplomats' "own protection". Diplomatic staff politely turned down the offer.

But they knew they could not refuse for long.

The Captain aboard Earth Force Two saw the situation rapidly spiralling out of hand. He had to get the diplomats and Earth nationals off Minbar before things got worse.

He called for help.

Only then did he inform Warrior Caste officials that evacuation forces were on the way to recover the diplomats and escort Earth Force Two out of the system.

The Wind Swords agreed.

The Star Riders did not respond

Meanwhile, the Religious Caste had been monitoring transmissions...

SPACE FORCES

Earth Diplomatic Squadron
Earth Force Two (350)
- 12x Star Furies (684)
- 2x Shuttles
Omega Command Destroyer "Thor" (1100)
- 24 Thunderbolts (1920)*
(12 equipped with co-pilots and 2missiles +312)
- 2x Shuttles
* Thunderbolts all committed to atmospheric operations. Not available for ship defence.

Star Rider Interception Force
Neshatan Gunship (2300)

Religious Caste Forces
2x Troligan Armored Cruisers (950)

GROUND FORCES

Earth Marine Corps
Yedor Diplomatic Compound:
- 4x Marine Diplomatic Guard stands
(3x Special Forces, 1x elite, 3x veteran: 1x Sniper, elite. All forward observers. All urban warfare specialists. 204points)

EAS Thor Marine Detachment
- 4x Standard Infantry stands
(all regular, 44points)
- 2x Anti-Tank Infantry stand
(1 veteran, 1 regular: 45points)
* 1x Air Support card: Thunderbolt & Hades strikes only. (100 points)

Star Rider Clan, Warrior Caste
Occupational Forces
- 1x Tal'Horcon platoon
(Regular, 124points)
- 1x Shard IFV
(Regular, 57 points)

Compound Assault Team
- 1x Assault Transport Tank
(Regular, 94 points)
- 6x Jump Assault infantry
(2x veteran, 4x regular: 124 points)

SPACE SETUP

Earth Force: Place Earth Force Two in the centre of the board. It is stationary. Its Star Furies are launched and in escort positions.

The EAS Thor can start within a three hex radius. At no point should this ship move beyond a five hex close escort radius of Earth Force Two. Its entire Thunderbolt component is off board, assisting the planetary evacuation.

Religious Caste: The two Troligans start within four hexes of each other on one edge of the board. Start speed determined by player.

Star Rider: The Neshatan starts at the opposite edge of the board from the Religious Caste. Start speed is determined by the player.

GROUND SETUP

Earthforce: Create a compound with light walls and a hardened building. Within this building place two counters - one representing the diplomats and the other the refugees. Marine forces are deployed on light structures abutting the light walls. A Hades Troop Transport arrives after three turns to lift the diplomats from the roof (Earth Alliance Sourcebook, page 30). A second Hades arrives for the troops after six. If needed, another arrives after a further three turn delay.

Star Rider: Place the Tal'Horcon platoon at the edge of their anti-air range from the compound. The Assault Transport and its escorting Shard AFV begin, with troops embarked, from the same location as the Tal'Horcons. The general terrain around the diplomatic compound is urban.

SPACE OBJECTIVES

Earthforce: Protect Earth Force Two and the diplomats at all costs. Make sure the diplomats reach hyperspace safely. Rules of engagement apply. Do not fire unless fired upon.

Religious Caste: Minbar's honor must be upheld. Foreign diplomats - even those of the despot President Clarke - have the right to free passage and immunity. Intercept the Neshatan before it can damage Earth Force Two.

Star Rider: Destroy the impetuous Earthlings. Their warship has violated Minbari territorial space. Their diplomats have refused to obey instructions. Their Thunderbolt fighters have opened fire upon Nials intercepting shuttles flying over restricted airspace.
Nobody must be allowed to get away with such insult.

GROUND OBJECTIVES

Earthforce: Reinforce the Earth Gov diplomatic compound. Do not fire unless fired upon. If attacked, fight a delaying action to allow the diplomats to board the shuttles safely. Once all diplomats are away, then military forces must be evacuated.

Star Rider: Storm the Earth Gov compound. Arrest the diplomats. They have repeatedly ignored instructions and have collaborated with the Religious Caste. They must be punished.

HISTORICAL OUTCOME

The Omega Command Destroyer Thor had been waiting in hyperspace, ready to escort Earth Force Two home.

Its Captain had been desperately trying to get news of events on the planet, but the Warrior Caste early in the conflict had shut down all communication systems other than local broadcasts.

The Captain resisted the temptation to contact Earth Force Two, maintaining radio silence as ordered until any call for assistance arrived.

Three days after the outbreak of conflict, that call came.

The Thor jumped into a close orbit above Minbar alongside Earth Force Two. Flights of Thunderbolts were immediately deployed along with several shuttles from both ships carrying armed Marines to reinforce the diplomatic compound while the politicians and civilians were evacuated.

Messages were sent to the Warrior Caste's commanders in the sector of Yedor, citing permission to airlift the refugees to safety.

The ploy worked. At first.

The first stages of the evacuation operation were carried out successfully. The shuttles dropped into the Yedor compound unopposed. The fresh Marines quickly deployed to the perimeter as the diplomats were ushered on-board

Home front

By RICHARD LECLERCQ
(Hardlec)

IN ORDER best to explain the perspective of the Religious Caste to Earthers, I have taken two examples from your history:

The Mighty Men of Israel were a small, elite group of soldiers recruited by King David. In theory, they owed allegiance to their God, and not to a man or a tribe.

They protected the Ark of the Covenant and the person of the King, had ceremonial functions, and were the first ready military force to protect the country, a cadre around which to form a conscript army. They became involved in intrigue and were disbanded.

The Vatican Guard was created to protect the Pope. They had ceremonial functions as well as security functions. In the late 20th century, (earth reckoning) they became more of a police force, as protecting the Pope and other dignitaries became more complex. When Earth went into space, the Catholic Church created religious colonies. The Vatican Guard was expanded to guard these colonies. Along with police functions, the Guard became a true military force, using (older) warships and fighters as well as ground troops to protect the colonists from raiders.

During the Dilgar War and the Minbari War, the Vatican Guard formed several ground divisions that fought with the Earth Alliance, and the Vatican Ships served in the EA fleet. During the Earth Civil war, the Vatican remained neutral and the Guard helped protect refugees. President Clarke found this a propaganda advantage, and the refugees needed the help.

During the Minbari War, a Battalion of Vatican Guard fought a rear guard action. Vastly outnumbered, a company of the Guard held a pass and fought to the last trooper. In a rare show of respect, the Windsword Clan troops built a monument to these troops, who were killed but not defeated. On a simple stone column, in every major language, was the caption: "We could destroy all but their Courage and their Honor."

Later, this same unit of Windswords would face a unit of the Religious Caste in similar circumstances.

SCENARIO: NONE SHALL PASS:

A: 2 Windsword (Minbari) Armor Companies, with attached infantry.
B: 1 Company of Mechanized Infantry (EA OR Minbari).

A units specific: All units are veterans, morale spirited.

Alpha Eliset:
Command Group: 1 Vision, 1 Shriek
1st Set: 1 Windsword HAT
2nd Set: 1 Windsword HAT
3rd Set: 3 Shriek MBTs.
4th Set (attached) 3 Crystalis IFV, 3 standard infantry stands, 2 Gravidere stands, 1 Tal'Falni turret.
No support elements

Bravo Eliset:
Command Group: 1 Vision, 1 Shriek
1st Set: 3 Shriek MBTs
2nd Set: 3 Shriek MBTs
3rd Set: 3 Shyriech MBTs
4th Set (attached) 3 Crystalis IFV, 3 standard infantry stands, 2 Gravidere stands, 1 Tal'Falni turret
No support elements.

B units (EA) (All units are elite, Morale spirited)
Command Group: 1 Aegir, 1 Sliepner, 1 recon team
1st platoon: 4 Baldur, 4 standard infantry, 2 AT infantry, 1 quiver, 1 EF-446 turret
2nd platoon: 3 Hel AFVs (light 1 unit)
3rd platoon: 3 Modi AFVs (light 1 unit)
This is a "company" scratched together out of survivors.

B units: (Minbari Religious) (All units are Veteran, Morale Spirited)

Alpha Eliset:

Command Group: 1 Vision, 1 Foltia AFV

1st Set: 3 Foltia AFVs

2nd Set: 3 Foltia AFVs

3rd Set: 3 Crystalis IFV, 3 standard infantry stands, 2 Gravidere stands, 1 Tal'Falni turret. The infantry unit replaces a detached Set.

Setup: a 4'x6' (standard) game mat is good. The terrain should be dense with many hills and 30% to 50% coverage of trees/forest. The B units may set up anywhere and are hidden UNTIL THEY MOVE OR FIRE. A units will enter from one narrow edge (determined prior to play) and must traverse the map. The long edges of the map represent cliffs and are impassable.

Victory: The A force must pass ½ of its force by number off the far edge of the map by turn 6. B force wins by preventing this.

In the actual battles, the Windsword commander grew so frustrated by the tenacious defense that he disregarded his mission and simply annihilated the defenders. The B player may win the scenario, but A will almost certainly win the battlefield.

SCENARIO: WELCOME TO MY PARLOR

A Scenario of the Minbari Civil War for GROPOS, with background information

Not all the battles between the Religious Caste and the Warrior Caste were desperate Last Stands by the Religious Caste. In one case, a Windsword Armor Eliset outran its Artillery cover, and ran into a trap laid by an Eliset of Mobile Infantry. The Windswords learned that even their HATs were vulnerable to close combat assaults.

A: Windsword Heavy Armor Eliset: Regular, Morale Spirited

Command Group: 1 Vision, 1 Shriek

1st Set: 1 Windsword HAT,

2nd Set: 3 Shriek MBTs,

3rd Set: 3 Shyriech MBTs.

2 sprites as FO/support, no other support.

(Morale of all units in the Eliset will be reduced when a tank is destroyed by an infantry close assault.)

B: Religious Mobile Infantry Eliset: Veteran, Morale Spirited

Command Group: 1 command Jump Infantry stand, 2 Jump Gravidere stands

1st Set: 4 Jump assault stands, 2 Jump Gravidere stands

2nd Set: 4 Jump assault stands, 2 Jump Gravidere stands

3rd Set: 4 Jump assault stands, 2 Jump Gravidere stands

Setup: A 4' by 6' area or larger. A units set up and begin as hidden. B units enter on one short end of the map (determined before A sets up) Terrain should be moderate, several hills, at least 25% of the area covered with forests etc.

Game length: 6 turns.

Victory: A scores points for each unit that "escapes" the far edge of the map, and for B units destroyed. Units that leave the entry edge of the map, or the long edges of the map, score no points for A. B scores points for every A unit that does not leave the far edge of the map by the end of turn 6, and for A units destroyed. Player who scores more points wins. The game is a draw if the margin is less than 10%.

SCENARIO: RAID!!

A Star Rider Eliset drove on a Religious Caste City, but did not achieve its objective. The Religious Caste attacked the Salient, and a Rapid Response Eliset achieved a breakthrough. They swooped down on the Eliset HQ. Now it was time for the Warrior Caste troops to die valiantly.

A: Eliset HQ unit Veteran, Morale Spirited

Command Group: 1 Vision, 1 Sprite

1st Set: 2 Shard IFVs, each with 1 Gravidere and 1 Tal'Falni turret (Scratch Set)

2nd Set: 2 Falsin (Scratch Set)

3rd Set: 2 Tal'Horcon (Scratch Set)

ALL units are ON BOARD

B: Rapid Response Eliset

Command Group: 1 Vision, 1 Fire Sprite, 1 Gravidere

1St Set: 3 Fire Sprite, 2 Assault infantry stands, 1 Gravidere stand

2nd Set: 3 Fire Sprite, 2 Assault infantry stands, 1 Gravidere stand

3rd Set: 3 Fire Sprite, 2 Assault infantry stands, 1 Tal'Falni turret

A standard size game mat, 4' by 6' is sufficient. Terrain should be light, 2-4 hills, not more than 20% of the area covered with vegetation.

A units are an HQ with 3 scratch Sets. The scratch Sets must behave like Sets.

All units that leave the map are considered destroyed. B forces may enter any map edge and choose after the A player sets up. (Yes, the Tal'Horcon are little more than targets.)

Victory: A survives 6 turns: Decisive victory

A survives 5 turns: Victory

A survives 4 turns: Pyrrhic Victory

A destroyed in 3 turns, B Victory

A destroyed in 2 turns, B decisive.

A units that rout are considered destroyed. A units that are damaged and become immobile or lose their primary weapons are considered destroyed.

* * *

and carried into orbit.

The diplomats were evacuated safely. But, on the second drop, when troops and civilians were scheduled to be picked-up, the situation deteriorated.

The EAS Thor detected several Minbari ships closing on its position. It was unable to determine their identity or class.

A flight of Nials intercepted the Shuttles above Yedor, ordering them to change course and follow the Nials to a Star Rider landing field. The Shuttle pilots were ordered not to comply

Earth Force rules of engagement were the standard "do not fire unless fired upon".

Tensions grew when Thunderbolts closed with the shuttles, "painting" the threatening Nials with their targeting radars.

The Nials, outnumbered, backed off.

The second pickup was also successful.

The third drop - to recover the Marines deployed to cover the operation - proved much more difficult.

A flight of Nials closed with the shuttles and opened fire. The Thunderbolts immediately responded. The resulting dogfight allowed the shuttles to slip into the compound. Fighting had broken out around the perimeter.

Several Marines were killed covering the retreat of their comrades. One shuttle was shot down as it lifted off from the compound. A flight of Thunderbolts was summoned for an emergency air strike, targeting the anti-aircraft vehicles. The surviving shuttles escaped.

The final shuttle mission had only just reached the upper atmosphere when matters became somewhat complicated for the EAS Thor. A Minbari Neshatan Gunship - Caste unknown - was approaching from behind. Two Troligan Cruisers - Caste unknown - were approaching from ahead.

Neither was responding to frantic efforts to hail them. The Thor could not open fire - despite the firefights at and above the compound.

Keeping his nerve, the Captain of the EAS Thor watched as the cruisers flashed between his command and Earth Force Two - opening fire on the Neshatan.

Both cruisers were soon overwhelmed. But the delaying action they fought allowed the shuttles and Thunderbolts to land without further incident - with the EAS Thor immediately opening a jump-gate to escape.

News of this event, of course, was immediately suppressed. All participants were sworn to secrecy.

* * *

The Zha'tu'rhi Incident
When the workers decided enough was enough...

By KEVIN L. NAULT (Klaatu)
and IVAN EDGERLY (Joker)

STANDING within the command center of the valuable Shantavi "Honor of Shaal Mayan" that is his command ship, Alyt Roanoon regards the holographic projection, taking in the almost feral majesty of his hunter/killer group and their undersized, and unaware prey. The three Shaveen police ships stayed near to the center of the beacon path, their helmsmen (such as they are) unfamiliar with war in hyperspace.

Riding confidently at the outer edges of the beacon, where less skilled crews would surely lose the trail in hyperspace's strange currents, Roanoon mentally salutes the Workers in their small ships for their skill in evading him this far, but he knew where they must come, and so he has found them. He allows himself a moment of meditation on duty, of a time when his task would have been to prevent the destruction of those ships. A time when Minbari did not kill Minbari.

The moment ends. "Alyt Roanoon to all ships: Targets will reach the beacon before intercept. We will allow them to pass through, and then jump to engage. They have gained only the privilege of dying where they can see the stars." Turning from his ships to those doomed by his orders, he pauses, and continues, "They will die with honor as Minbari, serving their Caste and their Clans. We should all hope that we might someday deserve such an epitaph."

DURING the Minbari civil war, the Worker Caste was, in many ways, in a difficult position. They refused to actively support either the Warrior or the Religious Caste. Not surprisingly, the Warriors quickly began to win the war. Also not surprisingly, their treatment of the Workers was somewhat less than what the Workers would have wished.

Some Workers decided that something needed to be done about the imbalance in the war footing. One group, serving as laborers in a Warrior shipyard and command center stole vital war data by committing to memory fleet deployments, orders of battle, assigned missions, and resupply opportunities. They then boarded what ships were available to them, and attempted to convey what they had stolen to the Religious Caste. Being inexperienced spies, their contact with a ship of the Religious Caste did not go unnoticed; the Warrior Caste dispatched a hunter/killer group to intercept and destroy them before the critical knowledge was conveyed.

The police ships that had been available to the Workers did, however, have one advantage: speed. Combined with their knowledge of the distribution of Warrior Caste ships, the Workers were able to evade their pursuers until the unavoidable rendezvous with a ship of the Religious Caste: the Zha'tu'rhi.

Those who had the Warrior's secrets are divided between the three ships, to enhance the likelihood of any kind of success. Each ship's "payload" of knowledge can be transferred via a single flyer.

SETUP:
A semi-floating map with a Civilian Jump Gate in the center (the jump gate must remain on the map). Two jump points must be chosen. The Workers will enter through the jump gate, but before that, the Religious and Warrior players must both choose where their jump point(s) will open and record it secretly. Turn 1 begins with the jump point within the gate open. The Worker ships enter through this point. During the jump point formation segment of Turn 1, the Warrior jump points form subject to the usual formation rules.

SPECIAL RULES:
Check the shuttle escape rule in the Rules Compendium, page 137. Ramming is allowed for all ships. At the end of every turn, beginning Turn 1, the Religious Caste player rolls 1d6, keeping a running total. When the total reaches 13, a jump point forms at the point chosen by the Religious Caste player during setup, subject to the usual formation rules.

FORCES:
Worker Caste (1,770)
1x Shaveen Leader with Transport Flyer (640)
2x Shaveen Police Cutters with Transport Flyers (1130)

Warrior Caste (5,060)
1x Trolata (1,100)
1x Shantavi (950)
2x Tinashi (1,700)
1x Esharan (800) with
  6 Tishats (510)

Religious Caste (4,449)
1x Sharlin (1,825) with
  24 Nials (2,544)
  2 Transport Flyers (80)

VICTORY CONDITIONS:
Assign points to each side at the end of the battle as shown below. If the Warriors have two to five more points, it's a minor victory. More than five, and it's a major Warrior victory. If all three "payloads" are destroyed, and the Sharlin is crippled or destroyed, the Warrior victory is total.
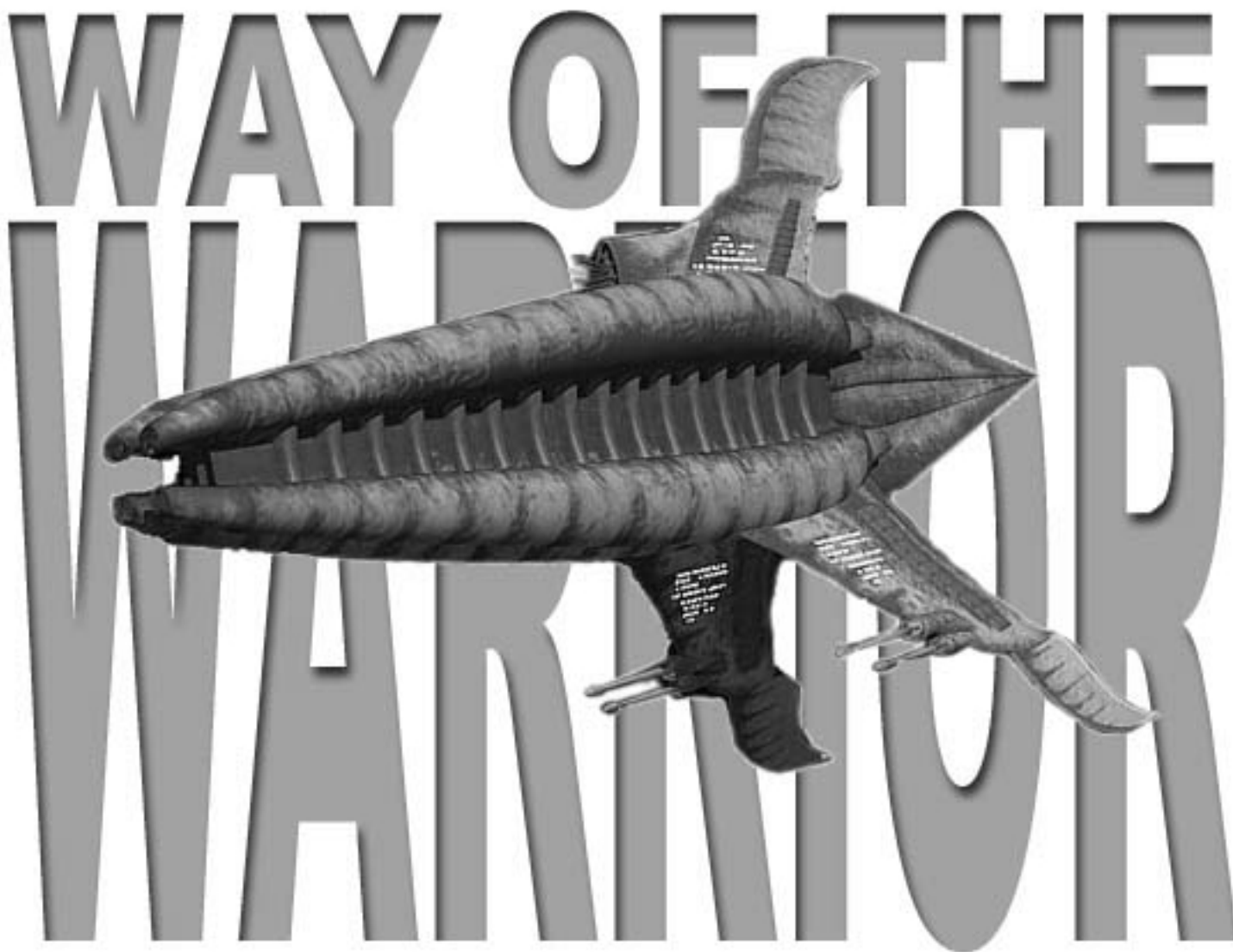
If the Warriors are only up by one, it's a minor Religious victory. If the Religious are up by 10 points or more, or if all three "payloads" escape, or if even one escapes but all the Warrior ships are destroyed, it represents a total victory for the Religious Caste.

Religious/Worker:
Each "payload" escaping: 10 points
Each Shaveen escaping: 3 points
Sharlin escaping: 2 points
Shantavi destroyed: 6 points
Shantavi crippled: 3 points
Other Warrior ship destroyed: 4 points
Other Warrior ship crippled: 1 point

Warrior:
Each "payload" destroyed: 6 points
Each Shaveen destroyed: 1 point
Shantavi undamaged: 1 point
All Warrior ships survive: 1 point
Sharlin destroyed: 3 points
Sharlin crippled: 1 point

* * *

WAY OF THE WARRIOR

Alyt Trannel paced across the bridge of his warcruiser. With arrogant pride he remembered how his ship and crew had performed admirably in the war with the Earthers. With quiet glee he stared through the bridge viewports and recalled how his ship's beams had cut the Earther's clumsy ships apart. Their ships were junk, flotsam to be disposed of. Compared to his ship's elegant, smooth curves, the humans' ships were but feeble shadows. But now, he was fighting his own race. Minbari versus Minbari. Now he would be facing ships just like his own. Trannel was no longer filled with pride and glee.

TECHNOLOGY

To start off, we'll group Minbari technology into three groups: Large Offensive, Small Offensive and Defensive.

Large Offensive

The category of large offensive covers all Minbari heavy weapons: the Molecular Disruptor, Antimatter Converter and the Neutron Laser (and its upgraded offspring). These heavy weapons can further be divided into 'old' and 'new'. The Antimatter Converter and Molecular Disruptor are both old weapons, dating back to the previous Shadow War. This is reflected in their poor range and awful anti-fighter capabili-

This treatise by **SCOTT MCGAFFIN** will cover the most powerful race of the Younger Races, that being the Minbari. This article will discuss Minbari technology, such as Neutron Lasers, Fusion Cannons and Jammers, Minbari units such as the Sharlin and Tinashi, and some tactics to better make use of the above items.

ties. But one thing they do have going for them, is damage potential. One of the Minbari's main advantages is range, mainly due to the effects of the Jammer. Hence, most opponents must close with Minbari vessels to actually be able to damage them. Against Antimatter Converter and Molecular Disruptor equipped ships, this is often a fatal mistake. Beware of the this 'age' difference as it will determine how you will have to fight. Old weapons means closing with your opponent, 'new' weapons generally means staying as far away as possible.

Molecular Disruptor: The Molecular Disruptor inflicts excellent damage, mainly due to the fact that most of its damage is preset. A whopping 30 points worth. Whereas the new Improved Neutron Laser can inflict anywhere from 22-58 points with an average of 40 points, the Molecular Disruptor damage range is 32-50 points with an average of 41. The averages may be virtually identical but the big difference is in the minimum damage. Due to having such a

large preset damage value, the Molecular Disruptor can better be gauged for its effects. Much like the Neutron Laser, the Molecular Disruptor is a raking weapon with a small added bonus that one point of structure armor is destroyed on the facing side.

Antimatter Converter: The Antimatter Converter is another weapon capable of inflicting huge amounts of damage. Because of the nature of antimatter weapons, they are more effective against low EW opponents. If you're planning on firing at something, lock on with as much EW as possible as you need to increase the "X" factor. If you have a scout in your fleet, get it to loan you some of its EW. Antimatter Converters fire in flash mode, so when firing with both Antimatter Converters and Molecular Disruptors, fire the Antimatter Converter first. The Antimatter Converter will wipe off weapons and thrusters etc., thereby leaving the structure for the Molecular Disruptors to consume.

Neutron & Improved Neutron Lasers: These are the newer Minbari weapons. These are the beams that with ease sliced EA ships apart in "In The Beginning". Arguably, the best lasers in existence, if not one of the best heavy weapons in existence. Superb range, fire control, rate of fire and flexibility make the Neutron Laser vastly superior to their much older heavy weapon compatriots.

The key to using them is to fire them as rapidly

as possible. This is to take advantage of their excellent rate of fire and range (as your opponents will be trying toclose as fast as possible). Destroy your opponents as far away from your ships as possible. Consider firing them on turn one and then recharging them again in sustained mode. Especially the Improved Neutron Laser.

Small Offensive

This category covers Fusion Cannons, Electro Pulse Guns (EP Guns), Shock Cannons and the Molecular Pulsar. The Minbari's main secondary weapon is the Fusion Cannon. As far as light weapons are concerned it is one of the best there is. It has excellent range and superb damage potential giving it the ability to knock out most fighters and to take large chunks out of opposing vessels. The Fusion Cannon appears on almost every Minbari ship from the smallest frigate up to the massive Shargoti Battlecruisers. It is easy to use. No special rules required. Just point and fire.

EP Gun: In my opinion one of the worst weapons in the game. It has two uses: knocking out a single fighter at a time (and it's not very good at this), and as a source of extra power. Which is one of the reasons why the 'EP' in 'EP Gun' can also mean 'Extra Power'. As an anti-fighter weapon, it's brutally awful compared to the Fusion Cannon. Its range is short of useless outside of one hex away. Its fire control isn't as good as the Fusion Cannon and it can only fire every second turn. It has NO effect on ships. But yet for some reason the EP Gun is widely used throughout the Minbari fleet. Shut it off and use the power elsewhere.

Shock Cannon: The Shock Cannon can be a handy weapon. Much like the EP Gun it can be used to knock out individual fighters. But, it can also affect ships by inflicting damage and reducing their power. Better range also helps it. But it is quite a power hog for it's size, so if you are in need of extra power, shut it off.

Molecular Pulsar: The newest small weapon in the Minbari arsenal. The Molecular Pulsar is the Minbari's answer to the Pulse Cannon. Easily the best Minbari small weapon, and one of the best in the game (although really it's a medium weapon). It has an excellent rate of fire, good volley count, and good fire control and damage similar to the Medium Pulse Cannon except with more pulses (on average). Maximize your use of EW when firing these guns!

Defensive

Finally we, have the defensive category. This encompasses the Gravity Net, EM Shield and the infamous Jammer.

Gravity Net: Although not a weapon, in that it cannot inflict any damage, it is very useful because it can be used to bring friendly weapons to bear and move opposing ships so their weapons no longer are in arc. Best used against capital ships and heavy combat vessels, the Gravity Net is able to move its target anywhere from 1-6 hexes. Doesn't sound like much does it? Think of it this way. Your opponent is using an EA Omega destroyer. He's one hex away firing 12 Standard Particle Beams. With the Jammer, the range penalty is -2. You fire the Gravity Net and move the Omega back 6 hexes. Now his particle beams are -12 to hit. 'Nuff said. It can be used to increase the range of enemy units, thereby increasing their range penalty or it can be used to move ships so their heavy weapons are no longer in arc. It can also be used to move your ships around in the same manner.

EM Shield: The EM Shield is a new Minbari advancement achieved with the aid of the Vorlons. Only used on the White Star, the EM shield provides a small degree of protection through two methods. One is the reduction of damage. Although two points is not much, it can be the difference between getting hit hard and getting hit lightly. The main advantage to it is the reduction of the vessel's profile, thereby making it harder to hit. A definite asset.

Jammers: Finally we have the Jammer. Probably the single most important piece of technology the Minbari have. This gives them the ability to sit at long ranges and pummel away at their opponents with only the slightest chance of being hit in return. Even the more advanced races such as the Centauri and Hyach are affected by the Jammer. Unfortunately this excellent protection comes at a price, and that price is high ship costs. Ships like the White Star and Tinashi aren't too bad, but vessels like the Sharlin are hideously expensive. More often than not, you as a Minbari player are going to be outnumbered, sometimes seriously outnumbered. Stay at long range and hammer your opponents for as long as possible. Hit them before your opponents' weapons can get a decent shot.

THE MINBARI FLEET

Tinashi- The workhorse of the Minbari fleet. The Tinashi is a relatively expensive heavy combat vessel, but that's to be expected for the Minbari. Firepower wise the Tinashi is pretty decent. For anti-fighter duty it's adequate at best, but does have excellent all-round coverage. For anti-ship duty it mounts three Neutron Lasers, two of them in excellent 120 degree side arcs. Unfortunately, two of its small weapon mounts are occupied by EP Guns. Turn them off and add to your existing extra power. The result = +10 power! At long range shut off some additional Fusion Cannons for a little extra and then boost your EW. Otherwise use that power to increase engine power, or better yet sustain arm one of your Neutron Lasers.

Ashinta (Tinashi variant)- A strictly close range variant of the Tinashi that replaces the three Neutron Lasers with an additional five Fusion Cannons for a total of 11 Fusion Cannons. The ship has enough firepower to obliterate an entire squadron of enemy fighters and to seriously damage warships. Like its base model it has excellent 360-degree coverage. But like the Tinashi it keeps the two EP Guns. Shut them off and add to your substantial existing power glut. You now have 14 extra power!

Because this ship is an escort it should stick close to the unit it's protecting. So at long range the Ashinta is relatively useless in a firefight. Put that extra power into increasing your defensive EW. Once your opponent gets nice and close use the power surplus to increase your engine power to further improve your shots.

Esharan (Tinashi variant)- Labeled an anti-fighter frigate, the Esharan is a variant that combines anti-shipping firepower with anti-fighter firepower. For strictly anti-fighter firepower, the Ashinta would probably be a better choice as it mounts 13 anti-fighter weapons compared to the Esharan's 12 anti-fighter weapons. But the Esharan does have anti-ship firepower in the form of a single Neutron Laser and two Shock Cannons. The Esharan is good if you want to capture enemy fighters. Otherwise choose the Ashinta (anti-fighter) or Tinashi (anti-ship). What the Esharan does have over the Tinashi base model and its variants is it can carry a single flight of fighters. This is somewhat of a slight problem with the Minbari fleet as a whole; they either have ships that carry 2+ squadrons or ships that carry a lone flight. They lack any single squadron carrying capacity. So if you only want to use smaller units and only want to bring a single squadron to battle, you may have to look at bringing an Ashinta. Also keep in mind if you're fighting opponents whose vessels are power hogs, the Shock Cannon can be a nasty surprise.

Shantavi (Tinashi variant)- The test bed for the White Star's advanced weaponry. The Shantavi is an excellent long-range attack ship. Close up it's not that good, as it has to rely solely on its two Molecular Pulsars. Also due to it losing most of its anti-fighter firepower, the Shantavi can be fighter bait. This is definitely a long range vessel as even against warships its close range firepower is rather meager. Beware of your opponents raking off the Molecular Pulsars then making attack runs on this ship. First chance you get, fire one of the Neutron Lasers and then power it up in sustained mode (you'll have to shut off one of the Fusion Cannons also). Due to the White Star being a Religious Caste only ship, and because the Shantavi is the only other Minbari ship to mount this advanced weaponry, it can be assumed that the Shantavi might be a Religious Caste only vessel. Play accordingly.

Sharlin- The pride of the Minbari fleet. Probably (cost aside) the best battlecruiser in the game (not including Ancients). The sight of a Sharlin should strike fear into your opponent. Unfortunately because of the huge cost of this ship, you'll be outnumbered. But costs aside the ship itself is superb. Its anti-shipping firepower is excellent in the form of six Neutron Lasers, with two of them firing aft. Only bad thing is there is a blind spot perpendicular to the port and starboard side. Its anti-fighter firepower and close in anti-shipping firepower is extensive. Mounting 18 Fusion Cannons in excellent 360 degree coverage give the Sharlin the ability to knock out almost an entire flight in any direction. Against enemy vessels anywhere from 5 to 10 Fusion Cannons can be brought to bear.

Something an opponent will surely regret. When fighting at extreme ranges consider shutting off the 18 Fusion Cannons and the EP Gun for extra power. This will give you 21 extra power. Boost your EW, and/or sustain charge a Neutron Laser or two or three. One of the nice advantages of the Sharlin is that not all of its front firing lasers can be destroyed if the front structure block is knocked off. And speaking of structure, the Sharlin has a huge armored front structure, more than virtually any ship it'll ever face. And on the topic of facing, a Minbari player should do whatever it takes to keep the front facing his opponent as this drastically reduces his Sharlin's chances of being hit. To further increase the ship's awesome potential, it carries two entire squadrons of fighters, usually the dreaded Nial heavy fighter. The only downside to the Sharlin is its brutal movement costs. Avoid moving at speeds over 9, preferably go much slower.

Sharaal (Sharlin variant)- A much older variant of the original Sharlin model. Due to this fact it relies on the Antimatter Converter and the Molecular Disruptor. It has half of the anti-fighter weaponry as the modern Sharlin (space needed for the heavy weapons). Of course this variant is a close-in fighter. Any weakness due to the loss of anti-fighter firepower should easily be made up by the ship's fighter complement. The Sharlin is a superior ship, but occasionally stick a Sharaal into your fleet to surprise an opponent expecting a Sharlin. One of the ways to beat the Minbari is to close to reduce the effect of the Jammer. Once an opponent realizes that a Sharaal is about, he might think twice about getting too close.

Shargoti- The Sharlin's big brother. Similar to the Sharlin except bigger. Everything on the Shargoti is bigger and should be treated accordingly. More guns, more structure, more armor, more versatility (in the form of Gravity Nets), more EW and more sluggishness. Use it as a large Sharlin, except provide an escort as it's the most expensive Minbari ship in existence and is quite rare (restricted deployment).

Leshath- One of the best scouts in the game. It mounts an impressive array of anti-fighter firepower with excellent 360-degree coverage. To further complement its own weapons it carries a single flight of fighters. These fighters should be used to protect the scout and should not be sent off on strike missions. Opponents expecting a cake-walk will get a rude awakening if they don't send adequate forces to take out this ship as it's quite capable of defending itself against smaller opponents and can take a considerable amount of punishment. Its structure is also fairly well armored. Minbari players should take care to protect these ships as they are quite rare (restricted deployment). They should always have an escort of some kind.

Tigara- An older attack ship, the Tigara's sole function is to close with an enemy and blast him into little tiny pieces with its Antimatter Converters and Molecular Disruptors. Beware of long range fire as the Tigara is incapable of replying. This ship is pretty simple to use and should be used similarly to the Sharaal. Race in, unleash everything you have, then race out while unleashing your aft Molecular Disruptors. Hopefully you'll survive the return fire. But if they're firing at the Tigara they won't be firing at your other more valuable units.

Torotha- The Minbari's standard assault ship. Unlike most race's assault ships, the Torotha is only equipped with a mere two assault flyers, instead relying on its ability to land on a planetary surface. For such a small ship it's very well armed , well armored and possesses excellent structure. Be careful of fighters as a squadron of enemy fighters can cause considerable trouble for this ship. As an alternative to carrying troops, Torothas can be grouped into wolfpacks and used as light attack ships, where their Molecular Disruptors can be used to great effect.

Troligan- Kind of an odd ship that has one use, that being a form of fleet support. Its function is to either move enemy ships out of their good weapon arcs and/or into friendly Minbari weapon arcs. To use its Gravity Nets, it has to get rather close to the enemy. Heavy armor helps it to survive. It has average anti-fighter firepower and should probably be escorted.

Rogata- A second line fleet support unit, the Rogata is not a frontline combat unit and shouldn't be used as
such. Use the Gravity Nets to keep it out of harm's way. Run away! Either that or use it as a crappy Troligan. Use the extra power to increase defensive EW.

Retlata (Rogata variant)- Very similar to the base model except swaps out the Gravity Nets and the tractor beams for two additional Fusion Cannons and Free Hits (otherwise known as cargo). Use just like the base model.
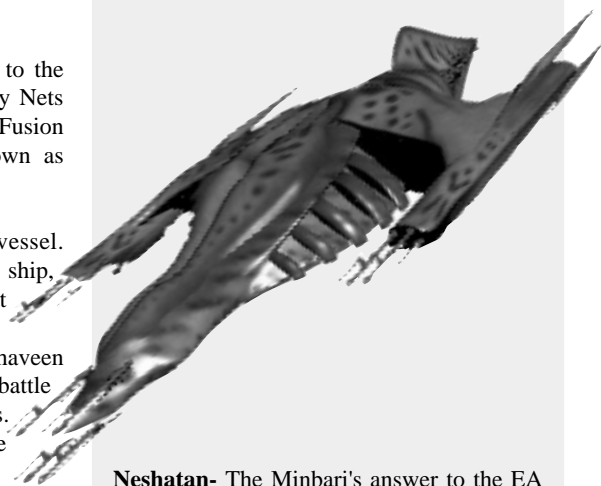
Shaveen- The Minbari's anti-raider vessel. Although easily a match for a Raider ship, against dedicated warships it would not last long. Its firepower is rather meager at best. If used in a fleet role, the Shaveen should be kept on the very fringes of a battle where it can prey on crippled enemy ships. It can also be used to hunt down and/or tie up enemy fighter formations.

White Star- Probably the best medium ship in existence. Considerable firepower mated to an incredibly agile and maneuverable hull. The only Minbari ship to use EM shields and adaptive armor. The White Star has two flaws: a considerable power shortage and a complete lack of aft-firing weapons. The White Star has two potential fast-attack uses: it can be used to isolate and destroy enemy fighter squadrons and it can be used to attack enemy units on the fringes of a fleet. Avoid racing into the middle of an enemy formation as the White Star's defenses could easily be overwhelmed.

Command White Star- Same as the base model except with a slightly better initiative bonus and a small amount of self-repair capacity. Use just like the base model except use the Command White Star to lead White Star formations.

Morshin- The Minbari's equivalent of the supercarrier. Ignoring its fighter complement, the Morshin itself has adequate anti-fighter firepower and poor anti-ship firepower. The serious flaw in this ship is this: for some bizarre reason the Minbari are obsessed with putting EP Guns on their vessels and in considerable numbers. Their only real use is if you want to capture enemy fighters as Fusion Cannons are quite efficient at disposing of enemy fighters and they can be used against enemy vessels. The Morshin would be better served if it had Fusion Cannons instead of EP Guns. Unless faced with a large enemy fighter swarm, a Minbari player should shut off the EP Guns for more power. Increase defensive EW! Also this ship should be escorted at all costs.

Neshatan- The Minbari's answer to the EA Nova Dreadnought. Mounting a dizzying array of Neutron Lasers, the Neshatan's role is long-range bombardment. Anti-fighter capacity is rather feeble, and because of this it should be escorted at all costs. That and it's a ridiculously expensive unit. Besides considerable anti-shipping firepower, the Neshatan does have large, well armored structure blocks that render it a tough ship to destroy. Like the Sharlin, this ship is a brick when it comes to movement. Sit at the back of your battle line and snipe away.

WHAT IF? DILGAR IMPERIUM

Fighting ships of the second Dilgar War

By BEN RUBERY

EAS Triton

THE EARTH ALLIANCE

As the EA approached the second Dilgar war they began a fleet wide refit of their older Hyperions in order to create a fleet capable of engaging the Dilgar. A number of test ships were fitted with Minbari technology, or jointly developed Molecular Pulsar weapons, and the end result was the Pulsar Hyperion and the Triton Advanced Destroyer.

Hyperion Pulsar Cruiser: Refitting the aging Hyperion hull with the latest available technology seems certain to extend its service life until the mid 2250s, when the Triton Advanced Destroyer series will take over as the EA ship of the line. The Pulsar Hyperion packs an awesome punch, and is a match in single combat for the improved Targath, but the Targath carries four times the fighters and it is this that assures an almost certain victory to the Targath in duels with Hyperion class vessels. The Hyperion now occupies the role of light cruiser or gunship in the EA fleet, and occasionally border patrols. While it can easily smash Raiders with its Minbari enhanced systems, the craft avoids engaging superior Dilgar forces.

Triton Class Advanced Destroyer: The Triton is one of the first EA ship designed by Human and Minbari engineers, designed with gravitic drive and the cutting edge of EA and Minbari weapon systems. Combining Pulsars, Neutron Lasers and interceptors with a Spinal Heavy Particle Cannon, the design is the largest EA ship so far. Designed to be able to obliterate Dilgar cruisers in combat, and with a fighter wing easily able to outmatch a Dilgar cruiser's fighter complement. This is the key to the design of this ship; it is made to fight the Dilgar. All the gravitic tech, the Minbari weapons, the fighter complement, it makes it a warship and nothing else. The EA and Minbari visualize jointly operated explorer and diplomatic craft in the future, but not yet. There were too many storms on the horizon, with the Dilgar and Shadows, to begin constructing such ships. The Triton adds +1 initiative to all EA ships in the scenario, as the Minbari provided communications and tactical gear gives the command staff the ability for far more precise management of forces. The initiative bonus is not counted twice, i.e. no Triton is treated as having a +2 init bonus.

Designers notes

The Triton. Smaller (slightly) and with fewer weapons than the Warlock, but with good arcs and a good punch on what it has. The Molecular Pulsars are the turret guns in the CGI art, and the small turrets are all treated as interceptors. Two of the projectors become Neutron Lasers, as the ship represents a joint venture between EA and Minbari technology, and so features the pick of both. The trick is not to make the ship really sickening. It is a good ship, but its high points cost and large range differentials (three long ranged weapons, everything else is -1 per hex) mean it requires some skill to use the ship. Carefully planned ballistics can overwhelm its limited intercept capacity, and it lacks Fusion Cannons or SPBs, the standard secondary weapons that could be used. Good luck with using the Triton class. The Pulsar Hyperion is a Hyperion jazzed up a little with Minbari technology, but is not radically different.

DILGAR IMPERIUM
Mishakur I Improved Dreadnought: After the war there was both an increase in the size, quality and number of Mishakurs deployed in the Dilgar fleet. By 2240 the Mishakur had become this monster, newly equipped with the Heavy Laser purchased from the Narn, and with an impressive array of Improved Bolters and pulse weapons. These ships led many of the pentacans encountered in the Dilgar war, and while they were no match for a Sharlin, if they could close the range (and one of the improvements made was in engine power), it could easily gut a Minbari cruiser with Bolters, Pulsars and Missiles.

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The little ship that could...

By REID HUPACH

EVER wondered, "What one ship could do almost any mission given it?" That ship is called the Mograth. One of the many Centauri MCV ships that are worth the points you pay for it.

The Mograth can fill several roles, which are everyday needs of a fleet. It excels as an escort, as a fast attack craft, a fighter hunter, a terrific pursuit craft, and also an anti-ship role. How it fills those roles in its own unique way is why it is such a good craft.

The best features of the Mograth are that it is agile with an initiative bonus of +12 so it can run rings around most ships and keep up with most heavy fighters. Its weapons array is formidable for an MCV, two Matter Cannons, 2 Twin Arrays, a Guardian Array, and lastly the Plasma Streamer. The Plasma Streamer is unique to this ship, it is found on no other hulls, and it is this weapon that makes the Mograth so deadly. When looking at the stats for this weapon it doesn't look all that impressive. 5 point rake, 3d10+4 damage. Average 20 points of damage split into 4, 5-point rakes. Until the special rules are applied: Each full rake reduces the armor on that location by 1 IMMEDI-ATELY. Hit a ship's structure 2 or 3 times and now your Twin Arrays can do horrendous damage to him. The Sensor rating of 8 on an MCV is an advantage also.

In an escort role it can protect other ships because it has great initiative to intercept fighters and small craft before they reach their target; plus its good mix if weaponry allows it to damage most of these craft severely.

Wolfpacks of Mograths can be a terror to even the largest of ships. 4 Mograths hitting with 8 Matter Cannons first, will strip several systems, leaving the structure particularly vulnerable to the Plasma Streamers. If they all hit that's an average of 16 points of armor stripped off before your 16 Twin Array shots cut him to pieces. Yes, as a fast attack craft the Mograth has few equals.

As stated before the Mograth is good at an anti-fighter role. It is fast and agile enough to keep up with most heavy fighters and will quite often beat them with its initiative. The Twin and Guardian Arrays are some of the best weapons against fighters in the game; even the Matter Cannon can be used occasionally to splatter a fighter.

Once your enemy has a few ships that are beat up he will try to get them away. Mograths are perfect for chasing them down and finishing them off, escaping from such a fast agile ship with a damaged craft is difficult at best.

Finally as an anti-ship craft, the Mograth has value as the lead ship in any attack on a large vessel. The Plasma Streamer alone can cause the enemy to wish he were elsewhere. This small ship can rarely take out a larger ship by itself but his weapons can open the side of a ship so that the ships following can enjoy a damage-rich strike on an enemy.

The Mograth: a small, inexpensive, fast, agile ship with the ability to cause lots of problems for your enemies.

BORN VREE

By BOING
(Vree Guildcaptain)
and GARETH SMITH
(Damnation - Interpreter)

Vree Tactics

How to play 3 games in one night

Choose your moment - timing is everything.

Standard Vree EW will be defensive until the round of decision. The trick is to determine the round. It's actually reasonably easy. At the start of a round count the range from your fleet to the enemy. Subtract your speed and your max acceleration. Subtract 10 from that. If the result is 5 or less then this is the round so pick your targets and go max offensive EW.

Often the best thing to do with a weapon is turn it off.

If you're not going to fire a gun, why waste the power? If you've no fighters to worry about this is easier to determine. Whilst buying EW is nice, for the Vree buying thrust is better. Reducing the range is as (if not more) effective to the Vree in improving their odds to hit. In the round of decision being able to close an extra hex or two will do you more good than buying one point of EW.

With power, maneuvering is easy.

The Xill, Xorr and Xonn, with power convert-ed to thrust, can become extremely maneuver-able. The Xonn can actually do a 180 turn to chase after over-flying ships. Assume speed 5 and your opponent has passed over you and you want to get into a pursuit vector. Decelerate to 4 (5 thrust), turn (6 thrust), reduce delay by 2 (2 thrust), turn again (6 Thrust), reduce delay by 3 (3 Thrust) and finally turn again (6 Thrust). This requires +18 thrust. Switch off 6 rear APGs for 8 thrust plus three fired cannons plus two front right APGs gives you the 18 total thrust and you swing around and hammer away with approx 4 APGs. Next round you switch back on as many guns as feasible and keep hammering away. And you're only looking at a +1/+2 over thrust. And the Xonn is the least maneuverable ship in the fleet, excluding the trading post.

Don't be afraid to get hurt, you can take it.

You don't have to be a psycho to play the Vree but it helps. The worst mistake you can make is being concerned about your ships. You can either reduce your chance of taking damage or you can remove your opponent's ships. You've got shipyards, don't be afraid to make use of them! Given you generally outnumber your opponents owing to your ship's lower cost you can afford to trade ships on a one-for-one basis and still win. Because of the X factor used in anti-matter weapons only just hitting is not a good idea. People have noted the variability in damage they got using anti-matter weaponry. If you ensure you've got good numbers to hit in the first place this variability should disappear. If you shoot someone with an APG with a to hit number of 20 then you will get a max X result of 10 out of the 20 possible results. That's 50% of your hits. If you're on a 15 then it's 25%. But this is yours to control. If the number goes worse than a 15, you should probably not consider fir-ing your anti-matter cannon. Anti-proton guns can be chanced as they have a high base damage and they fire every round.

The Anti-Proton Gun is your primary weapon.

Once the initial firing round is done the APG becomes your main weapon to kill off the remaining vessels. With its ability to fire every round you can sit on top of your victims and keep hammering away whilst they try to survive long enough for their heavy weapons to recharge. Once the heavy weapons fire, weapon hits should be taken on them if it allows you to retain APG guns that can fire sooner. Damaged AMC or Shredders can simply be turned off for more thrust to maneuver through the knife fight you should now be engaged in. APGs should always be fired first in any volley to strip away systems to let the Anti-matter cannon have a clean shot at the structure blocks.

Anti-Fighter

Your first option is to bring your own fighters.

Doing this will however reduce the overall firepower of the Vree fleet. Vree fighters can be countered much more easily than Vree capital ships. The second option is to use a citadel where all ships are massed into one hex that provides the maximum number of APGs in every arc. The APG gun is arguably one of the best anti-fighter weapons fielded by the Younger Races, capable of a guaranteed kill with two hits against 99% of heavy fighters field by the Younger Races. In order to degrade the APG's chance to hit, the average fighter has to be at least 6 hexes from its target thus suffering a -12 to hit. The APG only has a -1 to hit for range. This means that unless the fighters come to point blank their odds to hit will be a lot lower than the APG's resulting in damage being heavily in the Vree's favor. However if the fighters come to range zero then the Vree gets to put three structure blocks in arc and probably bring an extra APG gun into arc. The third option is a modified citadel. In this formation all non-shredder ships are stacked in one hex with the shredder-equipped ships in flanking adjacent hexes. If the Shredder ship is attacked it can use the shredder safely against the fighters attacking it. If the fighters attack the citadel its defenses are not degraded owing to the way APG guns work. Note you should prioritize killing the ships first, fighters can be mopped up much easier once the opposing ships are out of the way.

HCV

Don't use any of the Vree HCV. They lack all the advantages of the Vree capital ships. They can be easily destroyed and they will be targeted first and destroyed for that reason.

Counters

Things you need to be careful about are big plasma weapons and heavy pulse guns. Standard damage ballistics can be a problem but you get to see the launch hex and can centerline it so the effectiveness of such strikes can be mitigated. However, even against these weapons if you set up the pass right you'll exchange ship for ship and yours are generally cheaper. HCV/MCV wolf packs can allow opponents to match or exceed your ship count. However, most are a lot more fragile than your ships. Many HCV will cost more or as much as a Xorr but can be taken out by removing their front. MCV generally carry close in weapons so they have to close. MCV that lock you can be taken out with APG fire and cannon fire fairly easily, no more than one Vree ship should need to fire to kill an MCV, possibly not even all the guns. Piercing fire can be effective if your opponent gets lucky. If he gets lucky he does and there's not a lot you can do about it. But if he doesn't then you can console him as his ships are wiped out before the guns can cycle. To have realistic chances for causing fatal damage with a piercing shot, quite a large number need to be fired to have a good chance to get the killing hits, normally most of the weapons in a 3500 point fleet. Once he does that then you get 3 rounds whilst his weapons cycle to stop that happening again. And you probably will.

* * *

The shape of things to come

THIS ship represents the future of the United States's Navy. Designated DD(X), it is to be the technology test-bed hull for a range of next-generation surface combat vessels ranging from cruisers to assault ships.

Previously known as the DD21 (Zumwalt) program, Northrop Grumman was announced the winner of a design tender program in April. The company will lead the system design, engineering prototype development and testing of the DD(X) under a $265 million contract. The total design contract will cost $2.9 billion over four years.

The concept is radically different from previous US warships.

Taking into account changes in the world-wide strategic and tactical situation, this stealth destroyer is being built with a completely new doctrine behind its thinking.

Future warships are intended to be "littorial control" vessels - which, translated, means capable of dominating a given area in all of the sea, air - and now land - combat zones.

One of the DD(X)'s most unusual features is the two "supergun" turrets mounted on the forward deck. These advanced gun systems are expected to fire guided projectiles more than 100 miles inland. Their turrets are also a complete break with tradition. They are polygonal in shape, with the stealthy housing concealing the gun barrel when not in use.

In a feature not previously associated with cruisers or destroyers, the ship is also expected to house - in a bay beneath the twin heli-copter platform - several landing craft for an on-board marine contingent. The flight-deck is also likely to operate the controversial V-22 Osprey tilt-rotor troop transport. Both features are part of the US Navy's new emphasis on rapid deployment and special forces.

There are two multi-purpose missile launchers. What is unusal about this variation on the vertical launch system is that the mountings are positioned on either side of the hull.

The superstructure no longer has any masts or significant protrusions. Its shape is dictated by low radar signature and planar radar array orientation requirements. The double-skinned hull has an unusually shaped bow - again for radar signature purposes.

The DD(X) has an expected sustained top speed of 30 knots.

Further equipment includes active sonars, towed sensor arrays, torpedo countermeasures, a fully integrated computer system, and an arsenal of tomahawk, standard and evolved sea sparrow missiles.

Elements of the DD(X) design, including combat computer systems and possibly the advanced gun system, will be retrofitted to existing Aegis destroyers.

OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS

Edited by CROAKER

GOOD morning, Commodore. As I'm sure you know, the Minbari Federation is in the midst of a brutal civil war. Unfortunately, we believe the conflict may be spreading.

Yesterday, two outlying colonies were raided by a vessel they could not identify. The closest thing it resembled, to them, was a Shadow cruiser. Now, given that the Shadows have left the galaxy, this is unlikely, but...

<The admiral trails off as a yeoman enters to pass a message form>

Please excuse this interruption, Commodore. We've just received some actual imagery of the ship in question.

<He passes the form over to you. You've seen that shape before -- it's a Minbari gunship, Neshatan class, but with all the horror of the Shadows piled atop that older nightmare.... >

Commodore, you and your squadron are to find that thing and take it out, by any means necessary. Do you understand?

Scenario Setup

The Shadow Hybrid has been detected en route to Jumpgate Nexus 03F8, a junction point connecting several trade routes. There are no nearby planets, but an old Centauri trading post is located here to take advantage of passing ships.

Set up a single mapboard, placing a Marcanos station in hex 2215. It has 4 flights of Razik fighters that will join in the battle if the base is fired upon.

The Defending player should select his entry side and/or initial jump-in points. The Neshatan's player then selects where he wishes to start, anywhere within ten hexes of a board edge (except the one selected by the defender). The Neshatan has just jumped in 2 turns before the Defender force arrives.

Victory Conditions

If the Neshatan survives the scenario, the Defender has lost. If the base is destroyed as well, the Neshatan player has scored a major victory. If both the base and the Neshatan are destroyed, the battle is a draw. Any other result is a Defender victory.

Variations

Some possible ways to make things even more interesting:

- Use a different race's starbase, or even Babylon 5 itself, with appropriate fighters
- Add a pair of Drakh Raiders to assist the Neshatan in its marauding
- Create a different Shadow Hybrid, using, perhaps, an Octurion or Bin'Tak

REVENGE OF THE NARNS
(Venlesh)

"Commander Ne'Tal sat upon the bridge of his G'Stor Cruiser "Revenge" waiting for the last few ships under his command to take their position. The Kha'ri had allowed him to take any means necessary to find and destroy the target vessel. Ne'Tal, who had been present at the battle of the Armies of Light, knew what a single Shadow Cruiser was capable of doing. Hopefully this hybrid would show similar weaknesses against massed fighter attacks. Although he had tried to get a full fighter load for all ships under his command, his Sho'Kar Scout was missing its entire fighter flight. After they had won their freedom, few Narn ships and even fewer fighters were available to patrol Narn space. It would have to be enough, no more Narn civilians would die to this Shadow abomination!"

Narn Fleet:

1 G'Stor Cruiser 700 pts
1 G'Quan Cruiser 625 pts
1 Sho'Kar Scout 575 pts
1 Thentus Frig. 425 pts
1 Heavy Thentus 500 pts
w. Exp. Navigator 25 pts
2 Rongoth Destroyers. 970 pts
12 Frazi Heavy F. 696 pts
12 Gorith Med. F. 480 pts
Total: 4996 points

The doctrine for this fleet is rather simple: Try to close the distance without losing too many ships and fighters and try to concentrate your fire in one devastating (or at least crippling) blow. The Sho'Kar provides blanket EW for the ships and fighters and if it ever gets close enough should try to fire his Burst Beams at the Neshatan.

The rest of the fleet closes with full DEW until it can (hopefully) take out one side of the Neshatan. If it is built like a Minbari Neshatan there will be a hole in its defense, where the MCVs and fighters can "easily" kill it. The Neshatan would loose more firepower with the front, but the side weapons can fire front as well, so IMO the side is a better choice.

MINBARI DO NOT KILL MINBARI
(Tim Jordan)

The Shadow Neshatan was an abomination to

the Minbari. While the ISA said they'd send a fleet of White Stars to combat this threat, some in the Warrior Caste felt it was their duty to fix the problem. "Let Minbari take care of Minbari" was their motto. To deal with the threat the warriors put together a fleet of the closest elements to the Shadow Neshatan's last sighting.

2 Tigara
2 Tinashi with 1 expert gunner each
1 Letann
4,980 points

The plan was to have all the ships turn off their Jammers and point defense weapons (and jump drives in all cases but the Scout's), as the bulk of the SN's weapons were not interceptable and the Jammer would prove little use against another Minbari ship. The Letann scout would put extra power into its ELINT system, the Tigaras would put extra power into their defensive sensor suite, and the Tinashi would power their weapons to fire longer sustained bursts.

The Tigaras would approach quickly with the Letann not far behind lending defensive EW to the two ships. The hope would be that the scout would draw some fire while the two larger ships got within firing range, and the Tinashi would hang back. Once the Tigaras arrived they would go totally offensive and fire a full barrage to the fore of the Shadow Neshatan in hopes that the combined arms and flash based weaponry would fill and overload the ship's tendrils. The Tinashi would then also fully target the enemy with additional help from the Letann scout, and fire their lasers in the sustained mode hopefully causing enough damage to cripple or kill the ship.

UHMMM... YOU'RE WHO?
(Millygoat)

Commodore Limp Whisker stared at the comm screen aboard the cramped bridge of his flagship, taloned hand tightly latched upon the vidpad upon which his orders were stored. After years of isolation, the few Dilgar who had survived the war had finally decided to reveal their existence to the rest of the galaxy. For years they had built up their defenses, fearing that when they were discovered they would face immediate retaliation from the League. However, in this intercepted transmission the War Leaders had found an… opportunity. By finding this abomination and destroying it, perhaps the lesser races would understand that we modern Dilgar are different from those of the past, and would thus buy more time to prepare for what was to come. For with the ancients gone.... what could really stand against the Dilgar given time enough to rebuild? Time, that's all that was needed.

The Fleet:
-Mishakur Dreadnaught (975)
-Targath Strike Cruiser (580)
-36 Thorun Dartfighters (1800)
-3 Ochlavita Destroyers (1575)

Total cost-4920ish barring any math errors
Extra points spent on missiles, mainly flash, maybe some heavies or longs. Possibly upgrade a flight of Thoruns to Heavy Thoruns

Tactics- Come in fast, very fast. Maintain formation only as long as convenient, full defensive EW on the approach. Chances are either the Mishakur or the Targath will die on the approach, but that's to be expected. Once in reasonable firing range fire the heavy weapons on the surviving cap ships to deplete tendrils (including flash missiles if in range) followed by a joyful barrage of aimed point-pulsar strikes on the shadow-gunship's weapon/vital systems. The fighters will also approach at all possible speed to force the gunship to choose between targeting them or the fleet, and will proceed to continue to hammer the damaged tendril sections.

32nd Delaware Regulars
(th15)

To: COs of the 32nd Earth Regulars
From: Fleet Commander Delaware
Subj: General Orders 24th May 2259

We have received word from high command to move out and hunt down a rogue vessel of presumably Minbari origin. I have attached a file containing a shot of its silhouette. And here we thought it was all over. This...thing has begun raiding our outlying colonies, we have been charged with stopping it before it does anything more serious.

As such I have acquired the aid of the Oracle class scout Clytemnestra to aid in our search for this aberration of creation. My ship has just received enough fighters to replace our recent losses. Unfortunately we didn't receive any more pilots so most of our pilots will be going out alone this time round. The Leda will be in dry dock for quite some time and as much as we need her firepower we cannot afford to wait for her. Hopefully the repairs will be completed ahead of schedule and Captain Kylie will be able to catch up with us.

1x Omega Destroyer (Alpha model)
12x Thunderbolt heavy fighters with navigator
12x Thunderbolt heavy fighters without navigator
1x Oracle scout
2x Hyperion Cruisers (Theta model)
Total 4975pts

- Commodore Ishkal of the Abbai defense force.

GENTLE BEINGS, BE
CAREFUL OUT THERE.
(PaulS)

Abbai Defense Force
3 Lakara
3 Tiraca
1 Bimith
1 Shyarie
1 Fetula
6 Breaching pods
4975

Hopefully a few Laser hits will detune the target to make life less deadly. If the com. disruptors work they should concentrate on the moves the breaching pods close to make their run in safer. [Editor's note: Unfortunately breaching pods will be useless against the Shadow Neshatan due to its semi-organic skin, just as with other Shadow vessels. We wish the rest of the Abbai fleet good luck.]

A WHITE STAR WITH THE
KIRK PACKAGE
(UpThaIrons)

Set-Up: Upon seeing hard evidence of the existence of this "Shadow Neshatan" plaguing the space lanes, Sheridan and Delenn assembled the very best crew of Rangers possible for a very difficult mission... And then they proceeded to go on that mission with them. Some things you leave to your troops to handle, some things you don't. This is one of the things you don't.

Tactics: Before playing out this battle, hunt down all the relevant modifications and expert officers, read the descriptions three times, quiz yourself on what it all can do, read it again to make sure, then look at the implications of all of these mods and expert officers in combination. Only after you're certain you have a good grasp of what's at your fingertips should you play out the scenario. Don't forget that you've got two perfectly good combat flyers to play with. They won't do much more than bee sting damage, but even a Brahma bull can be killed by a ticked-off hive of Africanized Honey Bees. You don't have a hive to play with here, but you've definitely got something to split your opponent's attention with. Use it.

1 Command White Star: 825 points
Improved Sensors (11 point sensor array) +55
Improved Engines (18 free thrust): +465
Improved Reactor (+1 power): +30
Improved Thrust Ratings (all thruster ratings doubled): +744
Expert Helmsman: +5%
Expert Engineer: +5%
Expert Scanner: +7%
Expert Navigator: +7%
Expert Technician: +9%
Ultra-Elite Crew: +125%
Expert Security Officer: +7.5%
Expert Religious Leader: +15%
Lucky Captain: +50%
Expert Scavenger: +25%
Expert Laser Technician: +15%
Expert Anticipator: +15%
Expert Gunner: +10%

2 Combat Flyers 140 points

4,817 points

Thankyou!

By Diogenes

A YEAR ago there was much debate in the Babylon 5 Wars forums. The Tactics Guide had just been released - to mixed critical reaction.

Out of the debate Christopher Phang suggested all those with opposing views on how to best use their favorite ships should write their suggestions down.

He went on to propose these ideas be gathered in a newsletter format to be easily distributed among fans of the game.

The idea rapidly grew to include providing an opportunity for all expressions of creativity by fans of B5W, Fleet Action and Gropos to be archived and published.

A year later, with Christopher no longer with us due to the trials and tribulations of changing the country of residence, Babcom continues to grow.

Our first edition, in May 2001, received surprising support. When I volunteered to take on the task of page design and layout, I was expecting a newsletter of six to 10 pages a month.

But contributions were stronger than expected.

We started with a bumper 14 pages. By August it was 20. November was 25.

By December 2001 we were receiving material enough to fill 32 pages.

We're proud of what we produce. We feel we offer a magazine equal to - or greater than - many "official" game related publications fans have to pay for!

This is no easy task - not in terms of coordination, proof reading, designing or constructing.

But those of us who have volunteered to commit some extra time into managing this monstrosity do it because it is fun.

We will continue to do so for as long as we enjoy it.

And for as long as readers such as yourself continue submitting.

That is the nature of voluntary projects.

How do you get involved?

Simply by finding something you have written, built or photographed in the past - or finally getting around to putting your ideas down on paper.

Send us your ship SCSs - but include a note explaining why you built it in the first place, what considerations you made in its balance, and how you feel it "fits" in the B5 universe.

Send us your thoughts on the best use of individual ships and weapons. But tell us *why* you think the way you do.

Send us details on how to play one of your favorite scenarios. Take the opportunity to embellish the simple force list with some background fiction and drama...

Send us your battle reports. This can be either in fictionalised form or as a detailed, step-by-step analysis of the mechanics involved in a nail-biting game...

You are already doing all these things.

All we ask is you put fingers to keyboard and share your experiences with your fellow gamers.

In the process, you are helping Babcom continue to maintain its high standards of contents.

On behalf of the whole Babcom team - too many to name here, but you can see their names regularly on our pages - thankyou for your support.

Here's to another 12 months!