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Meet AoG's new commander on the front line of customer relations

Here is a message from STEPHEN TURNER - the new Field Agent commander.

Hello Everyone,

My name is Stephen "Stefin" Turner and I am going to be the new Field Agent Commander for Agents of Gaming's outrider program. I am looking forward to working with you all and hope that through our hard work and dedication that we can bring forth onto this world the wonderful games of Babylon 5 Wars: 2nd Ed., Fleet Action 2 and Gropos. Plus, there are always new and exciting things in the works. Thanks to Babcom for letting me include this brief message and thanks to you all for your support of both Babcom and AOG.

Here's a little background:

Hobbies: Games (RPG, B5W, Board), horseback riding, hiking, exploring nature, traveling, cooking and computers.

Goals: To some day complete a B5 Wars campaign, to own a couple of horses, to have children, write a novel and earn my PhD.

I am a scientist by trade and have a B.S. in Botany with minors in Chemistry, Geology and Zoology from Eastern Illinois University. I was born and lived most of my life near Terre Haute, IN. In 1993 I came to the University of Dayton, OH to obtain a M.S. in Biology with the intent on getting my PhD in Botany sometime down the road. During this time I continued to play D&D and had been doing so since 1988. However, I fell in love with my beautiful wife whom I had known since 1991 and was only friends with, and decided by the time I graduated in 1996, to remain in Dayton and continue working on a wetlands project with the EPA.

It was during fall of 1997 that I further explored the world of RPG's by learning B5 Wars. Having gotten into it because of my increased passion for the best Sci-Fi TV series at the time - Babylon 5. This in fact was the same year that I bit the dust and got married during the summer and took my loving wife to the United Kingdom for our honeymoon. Of course the beginning of it involved going to Wolf 359 where we

met and obtained in person, autographs of 25 of the cast and crew. So engrossed in obtaining the cast and crew autographs that it led me to attend Origins '98. However, I didn't realize that it was going to be a gaming convention and had not signed up for any games since I was only interested in getting Mira Furlan's signature. When I arrived, I found two of the regular gamers from Dayton trying to teach 15 beginners the rules and volunteered to help too.

Ahhh! This was the beginning of a long journey. I went on to Gen Con '98 and it was after volunteering at Gen Con '99 too, that I was asked to take over being in charge of the events and became the Volunteer Event Coordinator. Ask any of the FA's that have worked with me and they will mostly likely tell you there are three things about going to the con with me. One, is the ever-full cooler of food and drink but the other two you'll just have to come and find out.

Getting back on track, I was asked last summer to step in and take over as production manager (to get things organized and flowing smoothly). It has been a fun and tedious job all in one while I am continuing to work on becoming a 7-12 comprehensive science teacher. I started in September and have been working hard to meet the production schedule even though some of you are probably scoffing at that comment. I can honestly say that my crew is doing a #%#\$ good job and we are doing our best, if only we could get the silversmiths to do theirs.

It was only in the past couple of months that I had the luck of becoming the Field Agent Commander. I wish I could say that I am up and running in full but that would be a lie. It came all too quickly and I have so much to do with moving into a newly built home, finishing construction, meeting production demands, preparing for the conventions and recently sculpting FA scale minis. Bear with me though and I will get it under control and then we can have some real fun.

As the new FA Commander I want to say that I am always looking for good gamers that want to push the product by joining the FA program. Send an email with your name, address, e-mail address, phone and little about yourself to

FACommanderd@yahoo.com.

* * *

The state of the Union is - strong!

Turning Point Technology Brief From AGENTS OF GAMING

FOLLOWING is a look into some of the technology behind the Turning Point setting. Key to the future of commerce and transportation in the future are the Transit Drives, massive drives which allow ships to cross the space between planets (but not stars) as well as the more mundane maneuvering drives used daily.

Maneuvering Drives

Maneuver drives found on spacecraft are highly advanced ion propulsion drives pioneered in the late 20th century for use on satellites. In essence, the drive works by firing ionized xenon atoms through a charging grid that both accelerates and neutralizes the xenon atom. The resulting energy is propelled through a magnetic tunnel providing thrust to the ship. The size and shape of the tunnel is manipulated to provide varying degrees of thrust without an associated increase in fuel consumption making these drives very fuel-efficient. The charging grids used in modern ion drives tend to glow as a result of the process (similar to fluorescent lighting that used to be used widely) though the actual thrust created is not visible. In addition, as the charging grid neutralizes the thrust, it is relatively safe. Nearby vessels need not be concerned by radioactive backwash that was prevalent in early maneuvering drive systems. Another major advantage is the relative stability of the primary fuel used in these drives. Xenon is a stable element and thus will not be detonated when its storage container is ruptured or damaged as many older fuel sources could be.

Maneuvering drives are used by starships for standard deep-space and orbital operations. These drives are capable of accelerating ships relatively rapidly. Unfortunately, they cannot bring a ship to the speeds needed to make travel

between planets realistic. Such travel would literally require years to complete in some cases and require huge amount of fuel in all cases.

Transit Drives:

Transit drives are used by starships when traveling between the planets of the solar system. Rather than taking years to cross the system, the Transit Drive (or TD), make it possible in mere

months. These drives allow a ship to reach speeds of up to 0.005% the speed of light (that's a little over one day from the Sun to Earth) without requiring vast quantities of fuel to do so. However, ship traveling at transit speeds cannot maneuver, as the ship's normal maneuvering drives are not powerful enough to make significant course changes. In addition, the power requirement for these drives is immense. While

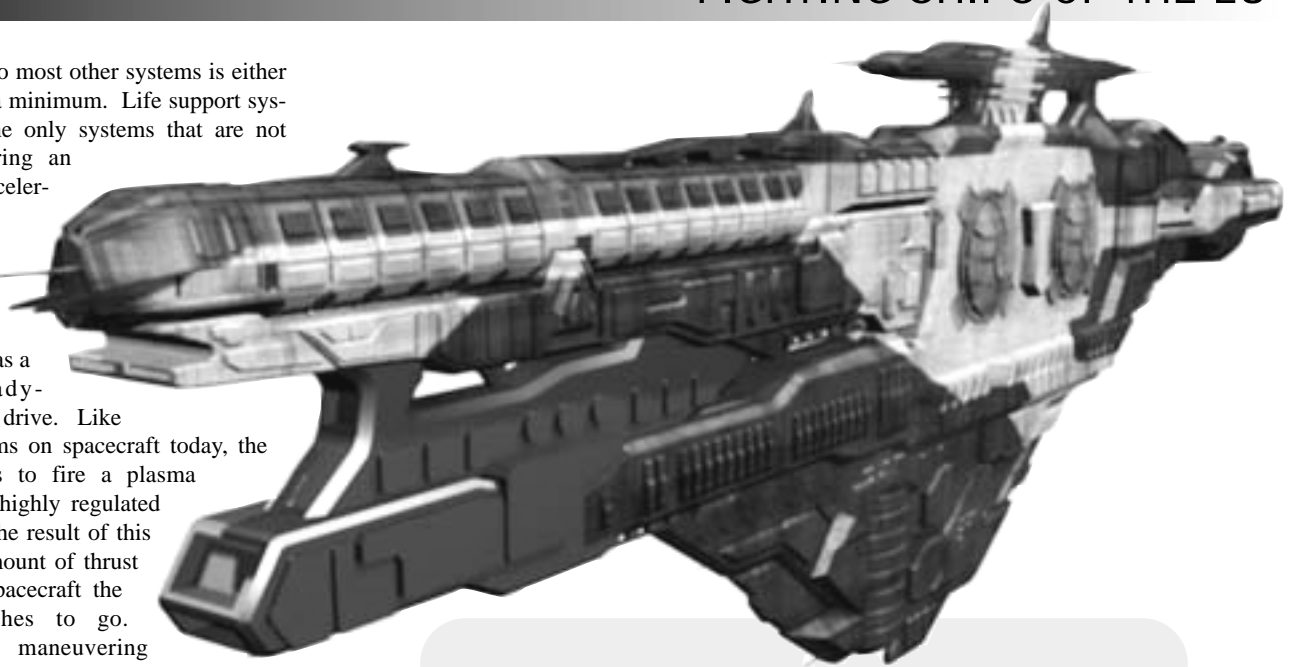


operating, power to most other systems is either cut or reduced to a minimum. Life support systems are about the only systems that are not compromised during an acceleration or deceleration burn.

Transit drives use highly advanced versions of what used to be known as a magnetoplasmadynamic (of MPD) drive. Like many drive systems on spacecraft today, the basic principal is to fire a plasma stream through a highly regulated magnetic field. The result of this is a significant amount of thrust that pushes the spacecraft the direction it wishes to go. However, unlike maneuvering drives use, these drives rely on currents that are high enough as to create their own magnetic field. In addition, the reactant used in these drives comes in the form of a molecular gas that is combed off the surface of specially formulated Teflon rod bundles. To achieve this, a super-high current is passed directly through the Teflon. This 'boils' off the surface molecules that are then directed through the magnetic field created by this same process. The constriction of this field gives the resulting plasma gas exhaust speeds in excess of 500,000 meters per second, enough to rapidly propel the craft to incredibly high speeds. Unlike the ion drives used in standard maneuvering systems, transit drive exhaust is dangerous to local craft. While not radioactive, it is extremely hot and can cause severe damage to any craft that stray within the stream. Standard safety protocols require the aft of the ship be clear of any craft out to a range of 5,000 kilometers. Beyond that range the plasma will have dispersed and are no danger to other spacecraft.

Early version of the transit drive had serious limitations due to the heat generated by the system and issues with the boil rate of the Teflon fuel rod. If the system were run for too long the heat generated would split and crack both the coils that channeled the magnetic field and the Teflon fuel rod. The discovery of Trilithin, however, rectified the problems. As the rare compound could easily withstand the temperatures and currents the drive required it allowed for the drive to operate for extended periods without the major overhaul the drive would normally require. In addition, inclusion of a Trilithin core in the Teflon core rods created a heat sink that channeled the heat away from the Teflon rod, thus preventing cracks and warping and stabilizing the boil-off rate.

The fuel requirements for these drive systems are relatively minor. The Teflon fuel rods are built to standards across the solar system, with



GARDE BATTLECRUISER

When the European shipyard received the design specifications for the Garde class of warship, they were somewhat baffled as the specifications were unlike anything previous. European planners called for a battlecruiser size warship that could both operate independently and act as a very capable escort for highly critical fleet elements. The Garde's armament is a mix of weapons generally designed with long-range engagements in mind. In addition, it is the largest ship to sport an Aegis array and has an impressive load of light torpedoes to protect against smaller targets.



DRAGOON HEAVY CRUISER

The Dragoon is the epitome of the European design. Armed with a mix of light and heavy weapons it can hold its own against just about any other nations equivalent warship. A series of torpedo launchers provide it an additional punch when it needs it. Dragoons are seen anywhere Europe holds interest in and is the most common cruiser currently in service in the European navy.



LANCER ATTACK FRIGATE

The Lancer is another new design that has recently come to light. This ship is a showboat of advancements the European Union has recently made in defensive systems. The Lancer has been designed with one purpose in mind, destruction of key enemy fleet elements. To allow these small, fragile ship to successfully engage ships many times their size, the Lancer relies on two systems. First is its array of Corona Sniper lasers. The highly accurate targeting systems built into these weapons allow the ship to engage targets at long ranges where their small size makes them difficult targets. The second system is the brand new armor that make the ship incredibly difficult to lock onto. This makes it very difficult to engage this ship at range - at least in theory. None of these ships have yet seen action.

the size of the vessel dictating what type of fuel rod is required. As an example, a fuel rod for a cruiser sized vessel measures 70 meters long and 15 meters in diameter. A single fuel rod is consumed during each of the acceleration and deceleration curves. Changing a fuel rod is generally an automated process requiring only a limited amount of supervision by a crewman.

Each rod tends to have a significant price attached to them, but this is significantly less than the equivalent amount of fuel that would otherwise be required for the trip. Finally, most ships carry enough of these fuel rods to allow up to 6 round-trip voyages. As the rods are stored in magazines not unlike that of a missile launcher, re-supply is a simple matter of pulling out the old magazine and inserting the new one. The magazines are, themselves, reusable. The ship's maneuver drives require a much greater amount of fuel and are often times the limiting factor to the endurance of a starship.

There are three stages to a transit - the term that generally refers to an interplanetary trip. Stage One is known as the Acceleration Curve. During this period the ship accelerates from maneuvering speeds to transit speeds. In order to avoid overly fatiguing the crew, the acceleration is handled in ten stages over a two-day period. During acceleration crews must be strapped into specially designed acceleration couches to avoid injury. The Acceleration Curve can be altered to speed up the process but this is generally only done in emergency situations.

Stage Two is generally referred to as the Cruise. During the Cruise the ship drifts through space. Crews on the ship operate normally during this stage. This portion of the transit is generally fairly relaxing and a lot of general maintenance occurs, as there is not a lot else than can be done.

Extra-vehicular activities are absolutely forbidden during a Cruise as a single mistake would cost the life of the crewman - there is no turning back to retrieve one.

The final stage, Stage Three, is the Deceleration Curve. At the point the ship is spun around to face the opposite direction of its vector. The deceleration, much like the acceleration, occurs over a 10-stage two-day period with the crews being relegated to their acceleration couches during much of the time.

* * *

(Included are brief descriptions of a number of European Union ship designs and the associated control sheets. These sheets are near final but may change a bit before going to press.

Their data sheets can be found in the Attachments Folder.)



GRENADIER TORPEDO CRUISER

The Grenadier was designed with one purpose, to put out large quantities of torpedoes in a minimal amount of time. Armed both with the large Bertha class torpedo launcher and the smaller Vixen class launcher, the ship is ready to deal with any size opponent, large or small. In addition, with the Vixen's high rate of fire smaller warships must be very wary when trying to engage a Grenadier.

The bane of the prototype and every ship-builder's nightmare: Unreliability

By **BEN RUBERY** and
NIKOLAS KOUMOUNDOUROS

SHOWDOWNS 5 and 7 give players a number of unreliable systems rules, but we've found that sometimes the rules currently don't cover enough contingencies. So we've come up with some additions, some of which can be incorporated into your designs, or can be used in scenarios to provide a salve to those who use experts and elite officers.

Unreliable fighter rules

POOR MAINTENANCE

Fighters suffer a +2 to dropout rolls due to the poor state the craft are in.

FAULTY GUIDANCE

Low-tech missiles, or those badly manufactured (not always smart to go for the lowest bidder) are prone to mix up targets or lose lock-ons. When fired roll a d10, on a 1 the missile locks onto a randomly chosen target between the firing unit and the target unit. If there are no other units, then the missile fails to lock on to anything and misses.

LIMITED POWER

The fighter frame mounts too many weapons and engine pods, straining the power source (reactor or fuel cells). The fighter cannot fire its guns if it uses more than half its free thrust. If it has a shield (unlikely on a low tech fighter) then to activate the shield reduces the fighter's free thrust by two.

POOR MANOEUVRABILITY

Halve the fighters jinking limit, and each level of jinking costs two thrust.

More Unreliable Ship Rules

UNRELIABLE MISSILES

When the ship fires a missile, roll a d10. On a 1 it misses the target automatically, but roll to hit the first ship between the firing ship and the target, and then any ship in behind the original target. On a 2-3 the missile detonates prematurely and does 75% of the damage it normally would, on a 4-5 the missile fails to properly detonate and cannot overkill a structure if it hits a system.

POOR FIRE CONTROL

The ship cannot use OEW and CCEW in the same turn. If it targets more than one ship per turn it suffers a -1 to hit per additional ship targeted.

MALFUNCTIONS

The ship is poorly maintained and prone to malfunctions. Roll on each section of the ship, and then roll a critical if you roll a system, or give the ship a -1 power deficit if you have rolled structure.

POOR COMMUNICATIONS

The ship cannot benefit from loaned EW or initiative bonuses provided by command ships, though it may benefit from fleet jamming.

INFLEXIBLE SENSORS

The ship cannot change sensor allocations by more than two points per turn. For example, if a ship has 6 points of OEW, the most DEW it can buy next turn is two points, the remaining four must be allocated as OEW.

LACK OF PILOTS

The ship can only carry 50% of its total fighter load due to a pilot shortage.

BAD OFFICERS

There are often navies where incompetence is allowed to prosper, whether it is due to political or hereditary appointments, as can be found in the Centauri navy, or due to an officer being promoted too far in times of war, as has been found in the EA and Narn during major conflicts. Here are a few officers to be used in scenarios or in campaigns where crew quality can go down as well as up.

POOR CAPTAIN

The crew has been given a buffoon to command them, and they know it. The ship is subject to -2 to initiative due to indecision. The ship must always paint the closest enemy target and cannot use more than two types of EW.

POOR SENSOR OFFICER

Cannot paint more than one enemy ship per turn. Cannot receive loaned EW, and suffers a penalty to hit equal to friendly fleet jamming if in the area of effect. Enemy ELINT ships break lock ons from this ship on a point for point basis, not 2 points jamming to cancel 1 point of OEW.

MOBY DICK

The captain has an unreasoning hatred for an enemy ship, and must move closer and fire upon that ship at every opportunity, even if there are closer targets. The ship must always maintain a lock-on on that enemy ship. These restrictions are lifted if the target of the obsession is destroyed.

POOR DISCIPLINE

The crew start at one level of readiness lower than is stated in the scenario description. If the state of readiness is battle stations for example, the crew are only at patrol stations. Fighters from the ship add +1 to their dropout rolls.

CAUTIOUS

The ship must always allocate half its EW to defence, and must reserve half its 1 turn weapons capable of intercept, to intercept enemy fire. When this ship loses a structure block, it must turn to present an intact side to the enemy and attempt to disengage.

SHIP OF FOOLS

The hand of fate has brought onto this ship the most miserable collection of ill trained, undisciplined and unmotivated scoundrels. Or maybe it's just one of "those" ships where every misfit in the navy is posted to. This collection of uniquely worthless individuals has an effect on how the ship performs in battle and otherwise as follows:

Initiative: the ship suffers a -2 initiative penalty at all times. **Thrust:** the engine produces 1 less point of thrust. **Thrusters:** half of the thrusters produce 1 point less thrust due to bad maintenance. **Sensors:** the sensor rating of the ship is decreased by 1 point. **Defence:** the defence rating of the ship is increased by 1 point (for all ratings). **Manoeuvre:** whenever the ship turns it suffers an additional point of turn delay. **Hangar:** launch/recover rate is halved. **Reactor:** the reactor produces less energy than it should, 2 points less to be exact. **Weapons:** all weapons do -1 point of damage per die due to sub-par performance and maintenance. **Criticals:** all critical rolls made by the ship suffer a +2 penalty. **Jump:** the jump delay of the ship is increased by 25%.

By TODD BOYCE

AFTER their initial attempt at using ballistic weapons on the Pla'sall'e in the form of the Markab Plasma Wave, the Pak'ma'ra realized that type of targeting was not well suited for their gunners. At this same time, as a result of success with the Plasma Web and

Plasma Batteries, an effort was made to create an anti-ship version of the Plasma Web. Early experiments as a direct fire weapon failed when it was realized that the amount of plasma necessary to fill a region of space that would damage ships would not only have an extremely short range but would damage the ship that mounted the weapon as well.

The Plasma Battery and the newly gained Plasma Wave technology provided the solution to this problem. A self-contained plasma bottle was developed that had the capacity to hold the required amount of plasma for a short period of time. Attaching a detonator to the bottle and using ballistic technology learned from the Plasma Wave gave the ability to deliver the weapon to a target location where the bottle would be destroyed and the plasma released. Though the resulting cloud of concentrated plasma was not able to do significant damage to a ship, it was found that it would damage the entire outer surface of any vessels passing through the region. Like its predecessor the Plasma Web, it also lingered for some time before dissipating. The results were deemed a success as Plasma Web gunners easily transitioned to using this longer ranged version.

A Thar'not'ak was modified to be the testbed for this new weapon as it had nearly all the necessary plasma conduits already in place that the prototype version of the weapon required.

Pak'ma'ra Plasma Detonator

Class: Ballistic (Plasma)

Mode: Flash

Damage: 2d10+8 (-4 per turn)*

Range: 40 Hexes

Range Penalty: none



Fire Control: n/a

Rate of Fire: 1 per 3 turns

Rules: The Plasma Detonator targets a hex and follows the normal deviation rules for energy mines. When the detonation hex is determined, the hex is treated much like that of a Plasma web: all vessels passing through the hex take the listed damage on 4 sides (1 hit down the centerline of each direction: fwd,port,stb,aft) regardless of the size class and resolved normally for each hit. The plasma dissipates after the movement of the fourth turn.

EXPLANATORY NOTES:

First things first, I really don't care for the Pla'sall'e. Not only is the Plasma Wave mounted on the worst hull in the Pak'ma'ra fleet, unless the ship is able to centerline (highly unlikely with a maximum initiative bonus of -1) it will only ever be able to fire 2 at any one target. This is pathetic. Particularly considering the deployment restrictions placed on the ship. The Pla'sall'e is an interesting historical curiosity to try every once in a great while but ultimately is a waste of an SCS in my opinion.

Not only is the ship mediocre, I also agree with the fluff that it's really not suited to the Pak'ma'ra tactical style. The Plasma Wave is simply not the kind of ballistic weapon I think the Pak would utilize.

However, with the Pla'sall'e in mind, I think it could be possible that the new technology and ideas that the Plasma Wave provided, could result in a new weapon system that IS more suited to the Pak'ma'ra.

The one weapon that really makes the Pak'ma'ra distinctive in my opinion is the Plasma Web and it got me thinking why they never developed an anti-ship version. Surely what works against fighters could be developed to work against ships as well.

So, the Plasma Detonator is what I came up with. It's a simple device that uses the technology that the Pak'ma'ra already have and rules that, for the most part, already exist.

The damage may seem high but I see this weapon as more of a "herding" weapon than one that will ever do very much damage.

Since it is highly unlikely that it will hit a ship (how often does an energy mine actually land in the hex a ship is in after all?) and since it has no extended radius of effect, it will usually only provide a navigational hazard forcing the opponent to maneuver around the affected hexes.

The weapon can also be used to augment the Plasma webs by creating barriers to enemy fighters as well. I see this as being more in the Pak'ma'ra combat style.

As for the Thar'not'ak hull, it's the only hull that doesn't have a variant for one, and also it is one of the few hulls that has the power resources available to handle a suitable number of Plasma Detonators.

The Detonators should definitely be considered heavy weapons and the arrangement on a Thar'not'ak makes more sense than it would on a Resh'kas'u, Pshul'shi or even a Sim'sall'e. All in all, the Thar'not'ak was the logical choice.

* * *



The far-reaching consequences of a one-sided war

By **DIOGENES**

THE ECONOMY of the Earth Alliance was virtually destroyed by the war with the Minbari. Many of the colony worlds fell to the invading forces. All of the remainder were attacked to some degree or another. Very few shipyards remained intact. Most orbital industrial facilities - of all kinds - were destroyed. Men, materials, transports - all aspects of an interstellar economy - were devastated. Not least among these was the Earthforce fleet. When the Minbari suddenly surrendered and withdrew to their pre-war borders, the Earth Alliance found itself with too few surviving vessels to even effectively patrol their frontiers. Emergency programs were put into place that were to have an effect on Earthforce construction and technical programs for decades to come.

AFTERMATH

Earthforce was devastated by the war. It had lost all its fleet carriers. It had lost all its Sagittarius-class missile cruisers. Many other ship classes and classifications were greatly reduced - if not destroyed. Those that survived the war were not in all that much better condition. The Hyperions, Novas and Olympus-class vessels had all been pushed beyond their limits. They had travelled far and fast, been hastily repaired and vital maintenance and scheduled refits had been skipped. Emergency war construction programs also had a detrimental effect. Some vital materials were scarce or completely lacking. Substandard replacements had to be found. Lower quality alloys were adopted in hull and reactor construction out of necessity. In the years after the war these compromises were to have an effect. Ships had

shorter periods between refits. Major repairs were more frequent and maintenance was an almost permanent operation. Despite this, Earthforce still had the need for hulls to patrol and protect its spacelanes. Hyperions, in particular, were upgraded with new weapons systems and electronics. But the hulls were still prone to defect.

yards continued to produce existing designs as fast as they could. But these ships had been demonstrated - in the minds of Earthforce - as being inferior. An emergency construction program was initiated - the Omega program. This ship class was to dominate Earthforce thinking for decades. It was based on existing proven technology - namely the Nova hull. Innovations such as the rotating habitat section gave the vessel significantly improved endurance over all previous Earthforce vessels. Its weapon load-out was also balanced and capable. But the need to rapidly replace war losses produced a one-ship mentality in Earth Dome. The Omega design was good. And standardisation would allow far more ships to be built far quicker than a balanced selection of designs. It was a hull that promised to be capable of covering the roles of patrol, escort, battle-line firepower and fighter deployment. So, this is what it was asked to do.

PARANOIA

Despite the Omega program, Earthforce had to contend with a deep-rooted paranoia. The once-proud military had been more than defeated by the Minbari. It had been devastated. And this was felt on the morale level as well as the material. Earthforce felt drastically inferior. This came as a great shock after the heights of confidence produced by its successes during the Dilgar war. As a result, new technology became the paramount goal of all replacement programs. Earth Alliance companies, such as IPX, were instructed to seek out and obtain as much new alien technology as quickly as possible.

POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION

The desperate situation in which the Earth Alliance military found itself in after the war called for drastic solutions. The surviving ship-





Quietly, they were told to do this at any cost. Even the Psi-Corps was instructed to use all the means at its disposal to ensure, and enhance, Earth Alliance security. Many government agencies and private corporations took this quest to heart. So much so that they abandoned all pretext of principle and ethics. The Shadow technology program was one result. The Aegis program was another. And these were just a few new technology streams that were to come out of the xeno-archaeological, interstellar espionage and internal Earth research programs.

But designing, adapting and testing all this new technology took time. The one-hull emergency construction program was proving its shortcomings. The Omega simply could not be all things to all people. So older Olympus, Artemis, Tethys and Oracle hulls had to be even further updated and modified. The first ship to emerge from the technological race was the Advanced Destroyer program - better known as the Warlock.

CIVIL WAR

The paranoia and self-esteem problems that the Earth Alliance was to suffer after the Minbari War was to ultimately lead to the Earth Alliance Civil War. This war pitted the isolationists who believed in protecting Earth at any cost, with those who believed the best chance Earth had for survival was to join the interstellar community as a responsible member. President Clarke was willing to commit murder for what he believed. His government made contact with the Shadows through Morden. But Earth had already gained access to Shadow Tech - without the Shadow's knowledge - through the amazing discoveries on Mars and Io. But only the Shadow Omega program had produced results by the time Captain Sheridan led his revolutionary fleet back into Earth space to reclaim the government. In the aftermath, Earth was to find itself in a surprisingly advantageous position. It had avoided the Shadow War which had devastated many interstellar nations.

And the Civil War had not been especially bloody. And Earth technicians had the benefits of all the advanced technology gained by Clarke's unethical means...

FUTURE PROGRAMS

The Apollo, Chronos and Delphi designs were all results of necessity. The one-hull philosophy had been proven a failure - in terms of both economic and military efficiency.

But these ships were stop-gap measures based on mostly existing technology. Now, Earthforce design bureaus are churning out all kinds of plans based on new armor concepts, new power sources, new gravitic technology, new sensors, new computers...

But not all this technology is well understood. Naturally, this leads to all sorts of problems.



Policing the state

EA Tethys VBSS Customs Cutter By JASON WELLS

THOUGH it is well known that the Narns sold the EA arms during the Minbari War, the type of weapons and how many is not as well known. Among the weapons were Burst Beams, though a good weapon, the leaders of the EA military knew that they would not work on their average ship of the line.

For this weapon to work most effectively, you need to be able to maneuver into a good firing position relatively close to your target, something the average earth ship just is not capable of doing most of the time.

So, for awhile, the Burst Beams the Alliance had were put into storage and forgotten until the Admiral in charge of anti-piracy decided it would be better to capture and make examples of raiders that were caught than to just keep blowing them up or chasing them away.

He sent some staffers searching around to see what kind of disabling weapons the EA might have acquired and put in storage, when one happened to find the Burst Beams in a warehouse in Australia (they were mislabeled as cans of freeze dried Spoo so of course no one touched them).

The Admiral then commissioned a panel to find a relatively cheap way to field the weapon effectively.

The panel reported that to use the weapon at peak efficiency you need something with speed and maneuverability, again something

the average EA ship does not have. One bright young enlisted staffer came up with the idea of upgrading one of the many Tethys roaming EA space.

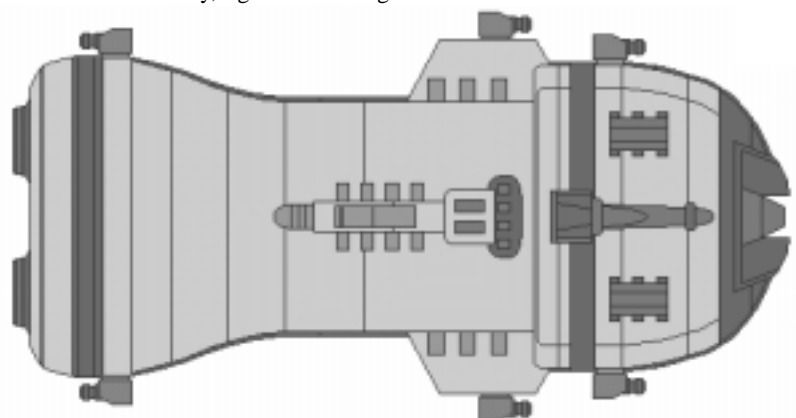
He suggested replacing the Medium Pulse Cannons with Burst Beams. The first time it was used it was a success, capturing a Q-ship full of looted goods.

Unfortunately the Q-ship was stubborn, jamming their airlocks shut when the Tethys tried to dock a shuttle with a prize crew on board. The Tethys had to call on a nearby Hyperion Assault ship to use some breaching pods and put some marines on board to finish the job. With the idea that not all the captured ships would just let the EA take over the ship once it was disabled, the ships were refitted with expanded shuttle bays to make room for a breaching pod and also part of the crew was trained in VBSS action (Visit Board Search and Seizure) to search for contraband and to act as a prize crew for the captured ship.

The resulting craft was a success there after, even though it is an uncommon model it is only limited by the supply of Burst Beams the Alliance has at the time.

The Narns still charge a hefty price for the Burst Beams, so the supply is limited, but the Alliance tries to keep 1 for every 15 to 20 Tethys. Also, it has become a common practice to add a breaching pod to a normal Tethys and train crews in VBSS actions.

(SCS in the Attachments folder)





Tempest

ADVANCED HEAVY CRUISER PROGRAM

By **DIOGENES**
and **ROMAN PERNER**

THE END of the Earth-Minbari war left Earthforce with a diminished, battered and hard-worn force of cruisers. Built for use with the battle fleet, they had proven hard-pressed in their role as scouts, escorts, squadron leaders and in shadowing.

But the Earth Alliance's economy had been severely damaged by the war. In order to rebuild as quickly as possible, almost the entire defense industry was geared towards the mass-production of one new ship class: the Omega destroyer. The Nova shipyards were converted. The Hyperion and Olympus shipyards re-tooled. In less than 10 years, a significant force of capable super-destroyers had been formed.

But the older cruisers remained in service. Their fleet-support role was vital. And the Omega was not an efficient replacement for the diverse roles a cruiser was expected to serve. The most efficient of the fleet cruisers at the end of 2247, were the Hyperions. But despite their all-round capability, their advancing age could not be ignored. But even as the emergency construction program swung into action, concerns were being raised about serious imbalances within the battle fleet.

In 2255, this prompted a Defense Estimates Senate Committee "Whole of Fleet Review".

Among the primary concerns raised by the review was the lack of cruisers - and the operational flexibility they offered. Several new cruiser design proposals were advocated - cover-

ing traditional fleet-support designs and new general-purpose requirements.

Rapidly, four design concepts manifested themselves.

Design A (Apollo): A missile cruiser to fill the gap left behind with the destruction of the last of the Sagittarius class cruisers during the Minbari war.

Design B (Delphi): An electronic warfare cruiser for independent scouting and fleet support missions.

Design C: An escort cruiser to provide close fire-support for a fleet and protective screens for convoys.

Design D: A general-purpose fleet cruiser capable of line battles and extended independent operations.



CRUISER CONCEPT D

Initial conceptual ideas for Design D had the following characteristics:

1. To have the firepower capable of defeating any other cruiser.
2. To have a sustainable speed greater than the Omega.
3. To carry protection greater than the Hyperion.
4. To have an independent air wing.
5. To be capable of extended independent operations.

It was estimated the design and production would take five years.

No drawn plans were produced. These were merely preliminary ideas presented for discussion. No size was ever given. However, for the

above characteristics to be achieved with the technology of the time, they would have rivalled the Omega in displacement. But these

concepts proved the direction of

cle cannon being designed for the Advanced Destroyer Concept (Warlock) were to be carried in the bow section. The Warlock had just entered the pre-production stage and great expectations were placed in its main guns.

1. The secondary weapon systems were to be diversely spread to minimize the effects of damage while enhancing firing arcs. This was also to reduce the number of gun mounts carried to ensure all-round coverage.

2. It was desired the armor be of uniform depth with minimal structural breaks (such as gun mounts and landing bays).

3. The machinery spaces were to be extensively sub-divided for added damage resistance.

4. An internal rotating section, similar to that proposed for the Arctic Class cruiser concept (Cruiser C) for extended endurance.

It was the desire for high speed and maneuverability that dictated the size of the new cruiser design: the larger engine rooms took up greater space - consequently needing more armor protection and structure and thus producing a longer ship.

One interesting feature of this design was a completely new fighter accommodation concept. Instead of the apparently standard "bow-chute" arrangement of the Novas, Omegas and Warlocks, or the pods of the Hyperions, the new

cruisers were to have two independent docking bays underneath the main hull. This "pouch" arrangement further improved the structural integrity of the main armored hull above. The bow and stern entrances to these bays were to have

ty. Only Cruiser Concepts A and B remained in development.

CRUISER CONCEPT D-2

At the end of the Civil war the Tempest class was once again thrust into the minds of the Admiralty. Further cruisers had been lost. Many more had developed serious defects. A replacement for the Hyperion had now become a high priority.

In 2263 the Cruiser D design was re-examined in light of the new technological possibilities presented by the Interstellar Alliance and EA research programs. The new crystalline armor of the Advanced Destroyer Program could be adopted. It could potentially allow the same level of protection listed within the original proposals for a significantly reduced weight.

Artificial gravity was also being hastily incorporated into the finalized design of the Advanced Destroyer - now named "Warlock". As the Cruiser D design process was less complete, the artificial gravity systems could become a more homogenous part of the ship. It was estimated the subsequent weight savings from the removal of the internal rotation cylinder and the new armor would make the design requirements for the new cruiser achievable. But not all news was good.

Trouble had been experienced with the development of the Advanced Destroyer Program's particle cannon. All attempts to make the weapon smaller were proving futile and its rate of fire was disappointingly low. It was becoming obvious that the weapon's power would have to be further downrated for a cruiser size hull.

As a result, the main armament of Design D-2 was to be supplemented by medium laser/pulse twin mountings. These were to take the positions previously allocated to the standard particle beam mounts for defense against small craft and require additional power capacitors.

This compromise left a serious deficiency in close-range defensive weaponry. To reposition the standard particle beam mounts would necessitate a larger hull. The flow-on effects would be dramatic with even larger engines and engineering spaces required.

An initial weight-saving proposal to halve the number of fighters each docking "pod" could carry, was rejected as 24 were considered the minimum for independent operations.

The solution came in the form of conceptual plans for a new class of intercept-capable secondary weapon mounts being proposed for a top-secret program associated with the Interstellar Alliance. These gatling interceptors were advertised as being capable of both intercepting incoming fire and provide the necessary weight of firepower to engage small ships at close range. Despite misgivings about the unproven nature of this extremely complex weapon, it was

Earthforce thinking: to overwhelm contemporary cruiser-class ships by sheer weight of gunfire.

By 2257 the Cruiser D requirements had been turned into something more significant than the wish list of 2255.

But the specifications were similar:

1. Carry two particle cannons and four twin standard particle beam turrets.
2. Withstand cruiser-level gunfire.
3. Have sufficient speed to respond rapidly to emergencies, chase-down raiders and shadow more powerful capital vessels.

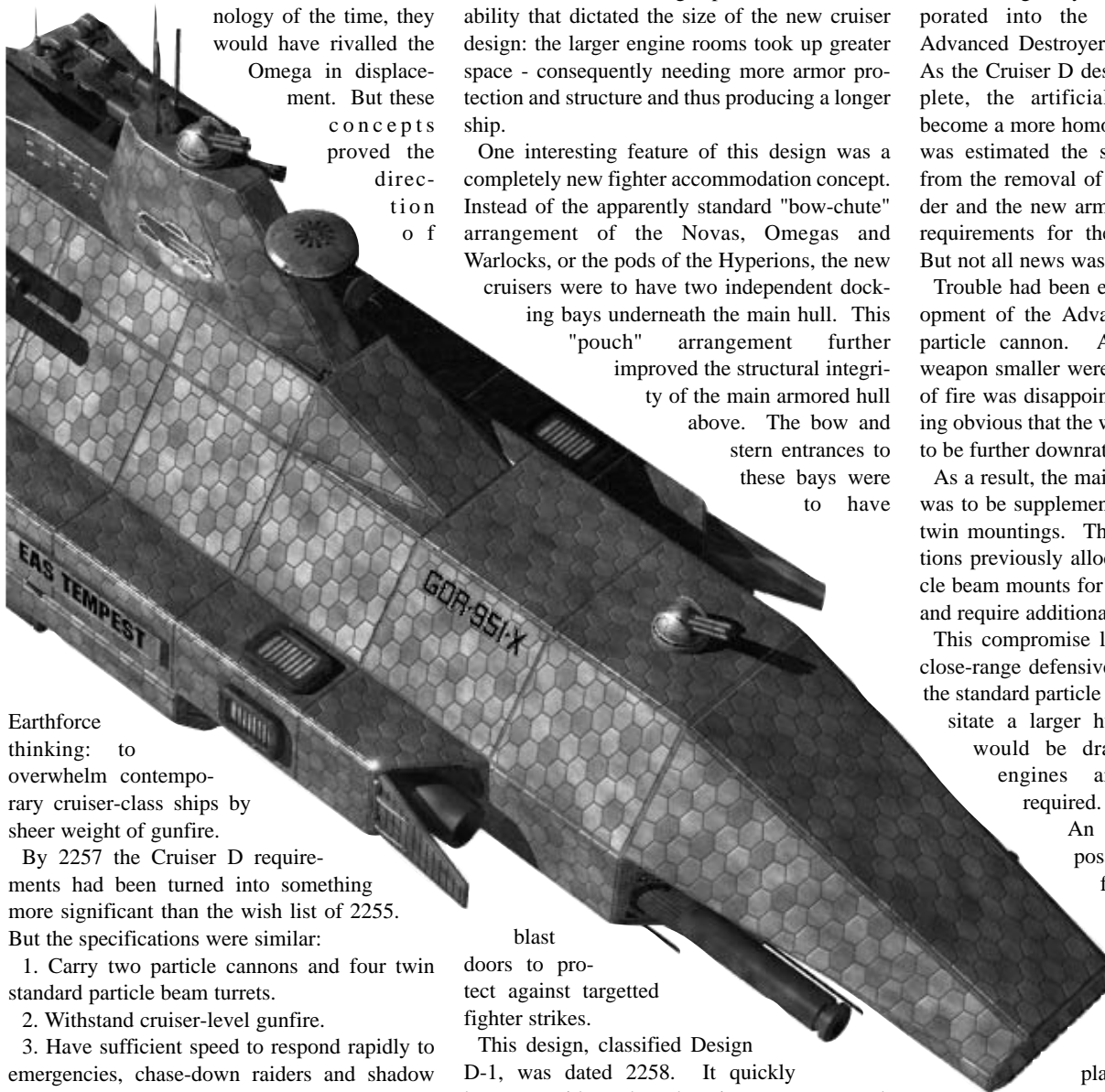
One new requirement not previously demanded of Earthforce cruisers, was to have a small turning radius, which was believed to be an important defensive asset for maneuvering against small craft attacks, as well as to bring its' primary armament to bear.

To provide the desired offensive firepower, it was decided two compact versions of the parti-

blast doors to protect against targeted fighter strikes.

This design, classified Design D-1, was dated 2258. It quickly became evident that the size, armor, speed, endurance and firepower requirement of this, the Cruiser D concept, was unobtainable.

Debate as to how the necessary weight savings were to be achieved dragged on. Proposals included dropping the fighters, the rotating section and even the particle cannons. Eventually, the program was put on hold. The Advanced Destroyer Program was given maximum priori-





adopted as the only suitable option. Fitting 18 of these new guns would allow the MK II Interceptor Array and the standard particle beams to be dropped.

Even after all attempts to keep displacement down, Design D-2 came in at a disappointing weight. The reason was greater length to house the generators and capacitors for the laser/pulse mounts and artificial gravity systems. The large number of gatling interceptors, which were individually much heavier than the Interceptor Mk IIs, also took a toll.

CRUISER CONCEPT D-3 "TEMPEST"

The weight problems further delayed the Cruiser D program. But by 2265, the condition of the Hyperion fleet had reached crisis point. Priority was restored to the Cruiser D program.

Once again the secondary armament came in for some discussion. The large number of mounts placed too great a strain on the available targeting systems and power generators. Of even greater concern was the reduction in the integrity of the external armor shell. There were now simply so many weak-points provided by the gatling interceptor power feed and traversing gear, that the chances of critical hits bypassing the armor shell was considered too high. The solution was to reduce the number of mounts.. The weight savings were also beneficial.

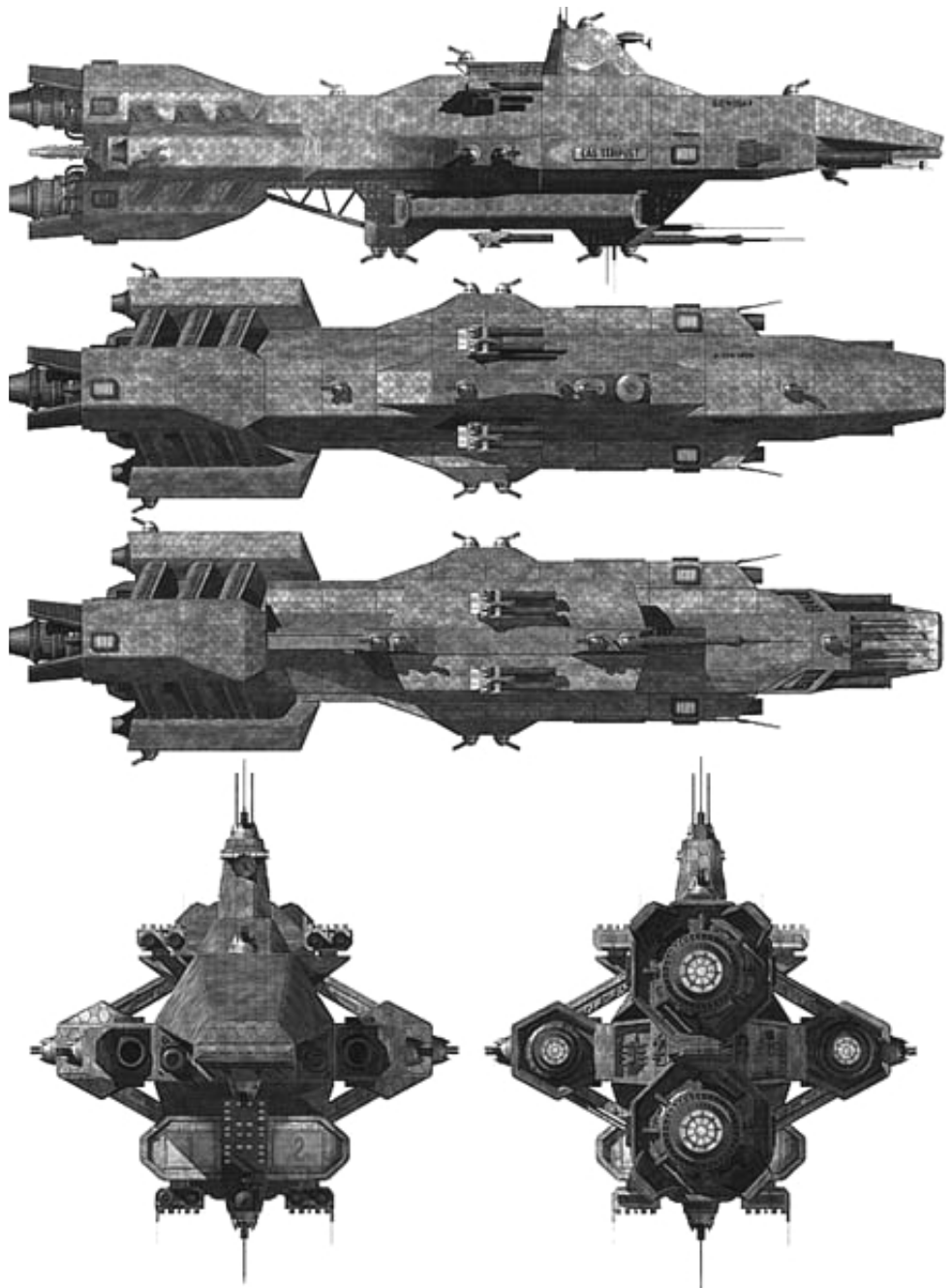
However, Earthforce resisted any further modification to the Cruiser D's war fighting ability. Now officially named "Tempest", the solution could only be a last minute upgrade of the main thrusters. This was to have one unavoidable detrimental effect: the larger thrusters required the armored cowlings to be extended. This, in turn, blocked the rearward firing capacity of the laser/pulse turrets.

However, by this time Earth Dome had become increasingly dubious as to the Tempest's value. The first production Advanced Destroyer (Warlock Class) Foxfire had been accepted into full service in 2263 after being put through its operational trials by Captain Susan Ivanova. The particle cannons, while long-ranged and powerful, proved to have a low rate of fire and high maintenance requirements. The gravitational systems were proving to have teething troubles and the advanced computer systems seemed to have a mind of their own...

These defects emphasized the extent of new technology within the Cruiser D concept - raising serious reliability and performance concerns, not to mention shock when it came to the cost...

The new Apollo and Delphi classes were nearing finalization. The Cruiser C concept was well advanced. A Senate estimates committee further ammendment the ship's size, armament - and cost - to a new Cruiser D-4 specification. In 2264 a resolution was put before the Senate for the construction of a single Cruiser D test bed to act as a proof of concept vessel. It was passed by one vote.

(The Cruiser D-3 design proposal SCS is in the attachments folder)



Origins of the EA Tempest

The Tempest is a fan design that appears to have been devised by Lars Joretteg as a drawing submitted to the Babylon 5 fan-art page Wolf's Shipyard.

His submission was for an Advanced Cruiser, contemporary to the Advanced Destroyer "Warlock". Essentially, it was one of the often-discussed Hyperion replacements.

The Tempest was one of a number of good-looking designs that were adopted by a community of Babylon 5 fans who also happened to be 3D computer artists and turned into fully modelled computer-generated objects.

The model used here was generated by Fabio Passaro, who slightly modified Lars Jorteg's original drawing - mostly through increasing detail and reducing the number of gun turrets. His 3D mesh of the Tempest has been available at various download sites for several years. As a result the Tempest now often features in fan created artwork - particularly in images featuring the Warlock.

Wolf's Shipyard:

<http://www.wolfsshipyard.mystarship.com/>

Fabio Passaro's homepage:

<http://www.frontier.plus.com/Portfolio/portfoliomain.htm>



Conflicts of Interest

Fiction: By DIOGENES

CAPTAIN Matheson stood in a shipyard supervisor's conference room above the observation deck below. It was an amazing thing, artificial gravity. The new technology had only been available for a few short years, but it had been given the utmost priority.

It felt odd standing next to the huge paned glass windows overlooking the lines of crewmen, kitbags slung over their shoulder, walking along the umbilical corridors towards their new ship. Their families remained on the observation deck, from where the ship had been christened minutes ago.

That ship now seemed to sit impatiently inside the scaffolding that was its birthplace.

That ship was to be his new command. Like an a crocodile poised to spring, the heavy cruiser's purposeful but sleek lines seemed bursting of scarcely-contained energy.

At first glance she looked a soft, light grey. Unusual when compared with the dull battleship-grey of most Earth Force vessels. But a closer inspection of the polygonal tiles that coated her hull revealed a shifting rainbow of spectrums that blended into an off-white.

Crystalline armour. New. Controversial. Hugely expensive.

Just like the rest of the ship, he thought.

Very little about the ship named Tempest - the first of her class - had been tried and tested. And Captain Matheson had his doubts...

He sighed. The EAS Tempest was looking more and more like some Senator's bid to win the votes of his constituents... or financial backing for his next campaign.

The security door buzzed open.

In stepped Senator William Fen

Captain Matheson blinked in surprised. Wardroom gossip had this man pegged as a future presidential candidate.

What was he doing here?

Frantically, he tried to recall who the Senator's backers were...

"You were on the Damocles, yes?" The Senator's voice boomed, deep and resonant. Captain Matheson blinked again. He had thought he had put that old stain behind him. Matheson had been first lieutenant aboard the EAS Damocles during the Civil War. On the losing side. But he was still not sure if it was the wrong side.

"Don't worry, man! It's because of the way you conducted yourself during the war that I got you this job."

The Senator's eyes drilled into him. "Don't let me down."

Matheson was stunned. He had had no idea he

had not been promoted on merit...

"You're here because we don't what happened to the Damocles to ever happen again. And I know you want that also."

The scene flashed into Matheson's mind. The White Stars had come out of nowhere. And even though the Damocles had the most advanced sensors Earth Force had at the time, it had been difficult to get a decent lock on the Minbari craft. Earth Force had been humiliated. Again. Just like in the Minbari war. Senator Fen stared appreciatively at the new heavy cruiser before him.

"This, captain, is the future. Ship's like this will make us strong again."

He turned back to the captain.

"We must keep Earth safe. The Minbari invasion was not retribution. It was aggression!"

"Who was that Dukhat guy anyway? Some religious fanatic. Who'd heard of him? He can't have been that important."

"To claim that his death caused the invasion is revisionist history. The Minbari wanted to shatter our spirit. Demoralise us. Nothing more. Nothing less. By god, I won't rest until we can return the favour!"

Senator Fen paced over to the thick glass panes separating the room from the cold hard vacuum and the warship beyond.

"We must not allow it to happen again. But we've said that before, though, haven't we? Belgium. Pearl Harbour. The World Trade Centre. San Diego. We were caught with our pants down. Unprepared."

"Why? Because of the cowards who say that talk is the only way to resolve differences."

"Santiago was a fool. He should have listened to us! The Civil War proved our ships were not good enough! Now this Sheridan fool has President Lushenko around his little finger. We won't need to tolerate the meddling of that damned Interstellar Alliance. Damn aliens."

He turned back to the captain. His voice suddenly quieter.

"I want no unnecessary delays. I want this shakedown cruise to go smoothly. And it must do more than meet expectations. It must exceed them! You do understand, don't you?"

"It's ships like this that will return Earth to its rightful place among the stars. And the president wants to stop us from building them!"

The Senator fell silent, but his eyes bored into Matheson's skull.

Captain Matheson felt compelled to reply.

"Yes, sir. I am certain absolutely everything will go fine. The Tempest is a fine ship. And she has a fine crew."

The Senator nodded. "They'd better be."



Gattling Interceptor Mark I (P)

By ROMAN ALEXANDER PERNER

WELL, my "Gatling Interceptor" was born when I made my first thoughts about the Victory-class...

At that time I just made the icon, and let it have stats like a Mk-II interceptor with the 2d6-based damage inspired by T-Bolt guns...

Then there was the Tempest, which had tons of small gatling turrets (the CGI designer seemed to like them).

Now, making these SPB's AND installing the standard EA interceptor grid would seriously overgun the ship IMO, so I remembered the gatling interceptor idea...

I thought about it, and also remembered these Gatling guns shooting at just about everything - not only fighters as interceptors are limited to, but they were seen firing in battles against Drakh raiders and other stuff too...

So I thought - why not?

Why shouldn't the EA try to make a gun that could do all jobs - firing at all kinds of targets like and rather short-ranged SPB (more on the range doctrine later), creating an E-Web like every other interceptor and shooting down fighters and stuff like nothing else...

They did the L/P-Array after all, so they seem to like multi-purpose systems...

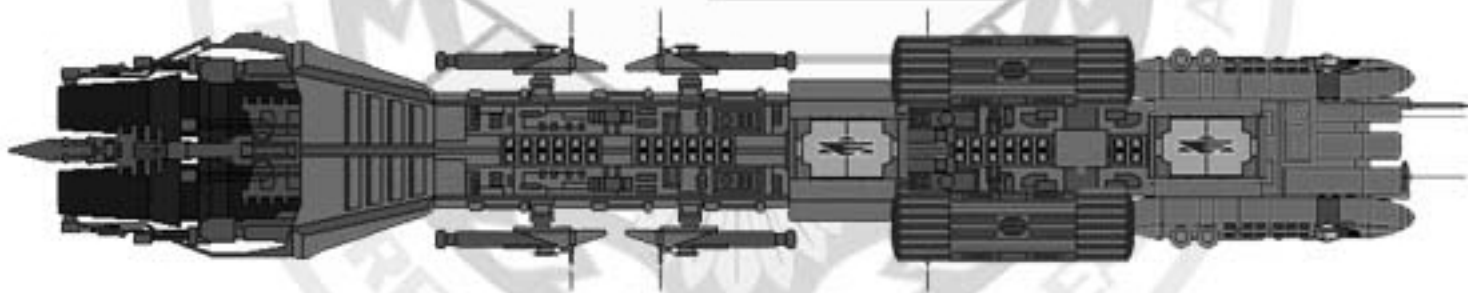
Then I thought about the implications of replacing everything with these new toys... mainly that the ship would lose the sometimes devastating SPB barrage (at -1/hex, 1/turn nothing to ignore)...

But I thought it wouldn't be that bad, mainly because the ships in question wouldn't be designed for this kind of fighting anyway - the Tempest for example seems more a long-range combat unit, sending it's "Fighter main batteries" out to do the heavy fighting, and using the punch of it's P-Cannons and L/P-Arrays to stop what they leave before it gets to knife range... considering this doctrine the added interception capability of the GI more than makes up for the lack of melee punch - especially since this doctrine means your ship has a better chance of surviving...



Cyclops

SPINAL MOUNT WEAPON TESTBED



By RICH BAX

THE DILGAR war was finally concluded in a bloody battle over the skies of the Dilgar home world on October 12, 2232. The battle saw the total destruction of all known remaining Dilgar forces and large percentage of the combined League and Earth Alliance forces. Following the battle the other races delegated the responsibility of policing the area to the Earth Alliance by virtue of the fact that Earthforce retained the largest surviving force. Until the politicians could determine the fate of the Dilgar people, Earthforce would be responsible for the entire Dilgar home system.

As part of that police activity, EA naval elements commenced a series of sweeps aimed at clearing local space of combat debris. In cases where larger debris could be identified, the Earth Alliance commanders notified the local league leader whose ship the debris was from. More often than not that race chose to destroy the hulk, rather than attempting to salvage it, thereby denying the other races access to it.

When the initial ruling was made that the Dilgar people were not to be destroyed, but rather quarantined, many races simply left rather than argue for a stiffer penalty. One of these was the Hyach. As one of the few races that had pushed for quarantine, the Hyach saw little

added reason to stay now that the League had voted. The Hyach had better things to do then expend critical assets on anything other than their damaged home world.

However, two weeks after the Hyach departed, an EA Tethys plasma cutter, while chasing down an anomalous sensor report, found the remains of a Hyach Irokai Kam class Battlecruiser. The ship had been presumed totally destroyed when it was seen to explode after being rammed by a Dilgar Delegor class Suicide Frigate. Apparently, the Delegor had actually sheared off the front half of the battlecruiser before it exploded and took the rest of the Hyach vessel with it. A total black out was ordered Earthforce command and a number of covert salvage missions were sent to the hulk. While most of the forward section was in shambles, the EA teams managed to recover the damaged Spinal Laser.

Initially, there was high hope that EA scientists would be able to unlock the secrets of the Hyach weapon. Unfortunately, it quickly became apparent that while EA scientists might be able to decipher the workings of the laser they were hopelessly outclassed by the miniaturization technology utilized in creating the weapon. There was simply no way to manufacture an equivalent weapon with the technology at hand.

Never the less, scientists continued to work on the project in a series of small, black funded projects.

Following the Minbari War, interest in the Hyach spinal laser was rekindled. Lasers had been seen as one of the great successes of the war, as it made the Minbari range superiority slightly less crushing. The purchase of heavy lasers from the Narn and the resulting knowledge to produce them opened the door for additional spinal laser research. In time, EA scientists managed to develop their own spinal laser design.

The primary problem with the Earth Alliance version of the weapon was heat. The Hyach's advanced miniaturization technology greatly reduced their laser's heat problems and their advanced cooling system had been totally destroyed in the original wreck and was therefore unavailable. The quick and "make-it-work-now" solution to the heating problem was the simple inclusion of a huge coolant system supported by equally huge coolant tanks to the laser.

To test the idea, an incomplete Nova was adopted to fit the new laser. The front hammerhead was basically replaced as a unit resulting in the complete removal of all ship board fighters and the deletion of the forward laser/pulse arrays. To further simplify conversion, the mas-



sive coolant tanks replaced the next row of laser/pulse arrays while the side mounted laser/pulse arrays were lost to coolant pumping equipment.

The resulting ship, the EAS Cyclops was launched in 2249 and immediately became something of a jinxed ship. Fleet exercises revealed that the spinal laser's poor firing arc in conjunction with the base Nova's poor agility made hits with the spinal laser more a matter of luck than anything else. Naval commanders hated the loss of fighters, made especially painful by the removal of no less than 10 of the 18 laser/pulse arrays. Finally, the spinal laser proved difficult to maintain, the coolant system sprang repeated leaks and the coolant pumping system was highly unreliable. Any failure of coolant system rapidly reduced the spinal laser's effectiveness to little more than an over-sized, longer ranged heavy laser.

It was clear that multiple heavy lasers would be more tactically useful than a single long-range laser and further Nova conversions were quietly dropped. Spinal laser research was continued but funding cuts following the development of the heavy particle cannon make any breakthrough in the near term highly unlikely.

Background and Credit

The basis of this ship hinges on the description of the Hyach Spinal Laser in the product "Militaries of the League 2." It reads, "The gigantic laser cannon is so large, and requires such an extensive coolant system, that only the Hyach (with their miniaturization technology) could ever hope to use it. Even the Earth Alliance could only produce one by wrapping an entire ship around a single cannon, making maintenance and repairs so expensive as to be unaffordable. (The prototype ship on which they tried this may appear in a future product.)"

Please remember that this ship was deemed a FAILURE. Earth only built one so it can't have been that amazing. The ship is meant to have problems beyond the standard and esoteric "high cost of" or "difficult in" maintenance fluff used with other designs. I therefore removed all of the fighters and 10 of the 18 L/P Arrays. I then added the coolant tanks with their supporting rules. Your not supposed to want to take a fleet of these. It's a case study conducted by the EA Admiralty that didn't work out.

I'd like to thank the following people for comments, ideas and consulting. Mark Graves, Klebert Hall, Symon Cook, John T. Colman, Jamie Coleman and Ned Farnsworth. Most of you will recognize these people as long timers in the Babylon 5 Wars community. A few might even recognize them as members of the mysterious "History Group." In any case, take a look and let me know what you think.

* * *

(FA & B5W SCS sheets are inside this month's Attachments folder)

Piercing the eye of the Cyclops

Fleet Action Scenario By ALEX ROBERTS

OCTOBER 2261: Sheridan's fleet is inching ever closer to the seat of Clark's government on Earth. Desperate to stop Sheridan, Clark has called up all available resources in an attempt to stem the tide of incoming rebel ships and their accompanying White Stars. Responding to Clark's orders, the EAS Cyclops powers up and moves slowly out of its mothball slip, joining a small group of loyalist ships bent on blunting the rebel invasion.

Situation:

Just outside of the Sirius system rebel reconnaissance fighters picked up the incoming loyalist fleet. At their head steamed the EAS Cyclops. Scans indicated this was a new ship, equipped with a very large weapon that occupied much of the front section of the vessel. Unaware of the existence of this ship, Sheridan's fleet sends all available ships on a mission to intercept this loyalist task group. Their mission, destroy this new vessel before it jumps again and possibly threatens Babylon 5 itself.

Rebel Mission Statement:

Sheridan has dispatched you and your task force with orders that if this new ship will not join the rebellion, it is to be destroyed. Standard military records show no indication of the construction of this vessel with it's large weapon, and you can only assume that it has been constructed with Shadow help and poses a grave threat to the rebellion and Babylon 5. It must not be allowed to leave the system.

Task Force Leader Squadron

3 White Stars

Squadron Alpha

2 Omegas (4 flights Starfuries each)

2 Artemis

Squadron Beta

1 Omega (4 flights Starfuries)

1 Nova (no fighters)

2 Artemis

Squadron Gamma

2 Omega (2 flights Starfuries each)

1 Oracle

Loyalist Mission Statement:

As group leader of your fleet, you've been tasked with harassing the rebel fleet pressing towards Earth. Your fleet, however, consists mostly of rejects and older ships, most of the

cream of the loyalist fleet being massed near Mars for the final battle. However, you do have one ace up your sleeve. The EAS Cyclops has been pulled out of mothball. Although you know that the ship itself was a failure after its production by a black ops section of the EA military, nearly 12 years prior, the rebels don't know that. Hopefully you can use the Cyclops to lure the rebels into a trap.

Squadron Able

1 EAS Cyclops

2 Hyperions (1 flight Starfuries each)

Squadron Bravo

1 Hyperion Command Cruiser (1 flight Starfury)

2 Nova (4 flights Starfuries each)

2 Artemis

Squadron Charlie

1 Omega Command (4 Thunderbolts)

1 Hyperion Aegis (Starfuries)

3 Olympus

1 Artemis

Squadron Delta

1 Nova (no fighters)

2 Artemis

Deployment:

Rebel Fleet: All Squadrons deploy on the opposite side of the map as the Loyalist fleet, no more than 3 hexes in, and no more than speed 6.

Loyalist Fleet: Deploy Squadrons Alpha and Beta on the board, no more than 3 hexes in from the side, at any speed desired.

At the beginning of turn 2, roll a d6. On a 5-6, Squadrons Charlie and Delta appear on either one of the 2 sides of the board not used to set up the initial rebel or loyalist squadrons. They start from the edge of the board, and may begin at up to speed 6. If they have not come in, they will come in on a roll of 3-6 on turn 3, or automatically by turn 4.

Victory Conditions:

Rebels:

Total Victory: Destroy or rout all loyalist ships.

Marginal Victory: Destroy the EAS Cyclops. Also lose no more than 1 White Star.

Loyalists:

Total Victory: Destroy or rout all rebel ships. The EAS Cyclops is not destroyed or routed.

Marginal Victory: Destroy or rout all rebel ships.

* * *

(FA SCS in the Attachments folder)



Scaling the heights of the Olympus' development

By JOHN HAMILL

OLYMPUS GAMMA

AFTER the Dilgar War most of the victorious allied races began developing captured Dilgar technology. The Earth Alliance was one of the leaders in the research of pulse weapons (having never suffered damage to any of its infrastructure).

While the end result of these programs was the proliferation of Pulse Technology amongst the younger races, there existed a period when the simpler Bolter weapons were in vogue.

The Olympus Gamma model was envisioned as a new workhorse for the EA fleet utilising the lessons learned during and after the conflict including the Beta model's improved armor and sensors plus the addition of an extra railgun over the Alpha.

It saw a promising initial run, but with the breakthrough in technology that resulted in the Medium Pulse Cannon, the ubiquitous Delta model was created and most Gammas were refitted in short order.

It was always a Rare model, since by the time production was beginning to replace older Alphas and Betas, the Delta appeared and became the new standard.

Several were kept as testbeds but none of these survived the Minbari War.

Reasoning: This is envisioned as a step between the War Era Olys and the more modern Delta. Sensors are 6 as on the Beta, and the weapons layout is as the Delta except for Medium Bolters, which I assume the EA could produce by 2236, instead of the Pulse Cannons.

As soon as the Delta appears in 2241 the sensors and guns get upgraded to modern standards and so finding a Gamma is pretty tough, hence the Rare status.

OLYMPUS EPSILON

FOLLOWING Earth's disastrous war with the Minbari, they found themselves basically without a fleet. While a crash program of shipbuilding was initiated to try and bring Earthforce back up to some fighting strength, there was a focus on large cruisers such as the Omega and Hyperion lines.

task at hand and so the Epsilon Olympus was born.

By replacing the forward Medium Pulse Cannons with a pair of Heavy Pulses the Omegas now had an escort that could maintain formation and give support without having to charge ahead and leave the cruisers vulnerable.

Learning from supply problems during the Minbari War, the Missile Racks were replaced with Medium Pulse Cannons which were deemed more suited to the ship's role as an escort.

The success of this model was still limited by the poor crew endurance of the Olympus line,

and these problems would not be rectified until the advent of the Chronos with artificial gravity, but the Epsilon laid the ground that its descendent would trod.

Olympus Epsilon is an Uncommon variant.

Reasoning: This is a stepping stone between the older Olympus Deltas and the new production Chronos Alphas.

Armor and sensors are as the Delta, since they couldn't improve the hull much more than they already had.

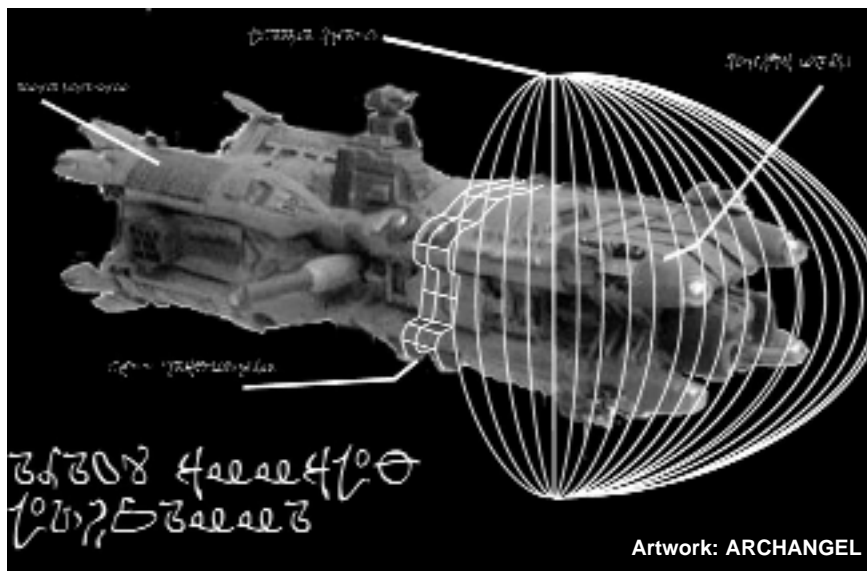
The weapons fit allows the Epsilon to stay with

Omegas and not leave them open to fighter or MCV attack.

The loss of the missile racks reflects Earth's supply opinions at this time frame but the railguns were kept for their simplicity and power.

It in all it should act as a fair escort (but a little short on fighter defence).

It's uncommon due to only appearing late in 2256, and not having a huge production run before being scrapped in favour of the Chronos.

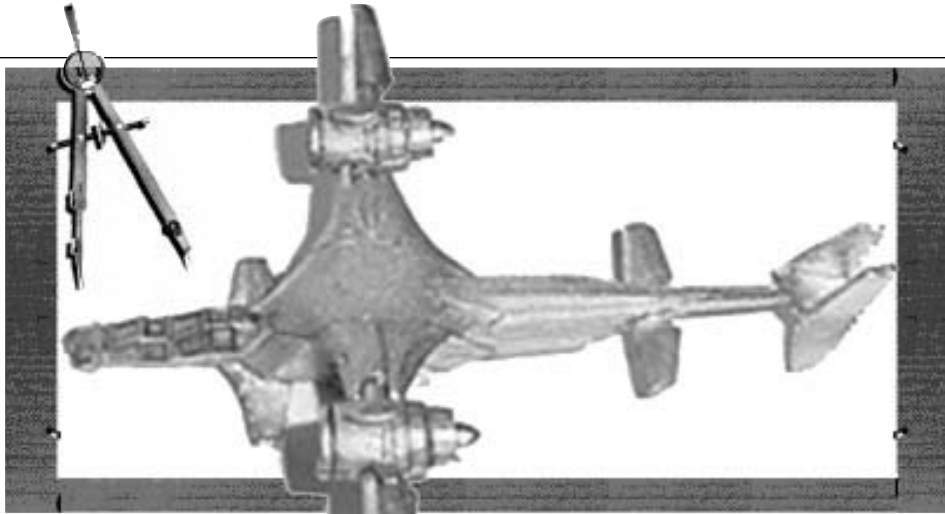


Artwork: ARCHANGEL

Plans were put in place to radically modernise the fleet including the Zeus, Apollo and Chronos lines, but these were far in the future.

After the decimation of the EA fleet, the new cruisers were left with little in the way of escorting ships. For a while the abundance of fighters was seen as sufficient to protect the cruisers, but after a time it was realised that some stopgap measure was needed.

The surviving and reconstructed Olympus and Artemis lines, were deemed inadequate for the



Command and Recon: The Frigga lifts VTOLs to new heights

**Prototype Vehicles for GROPOS:
VTOL command and scout vehicles**

THE Earth Alliance realized that the VTOL Air-Cavalry units were among their most versatile and most effective units. Their major problems had been the use of Gunships as command vehicles often deprived the unit of needed fire support.

The Valkyrie is not a great command platform and the over-riding need for Sleepners is as scouts. Sleepners were often not able to keep up with the VTOLS.

Keeping with the Ragnorak theme of naming EA vehicles, the names of Hugin and Munnion were chosen for prototype VTOL command and VTOL scout vehicles.

Hugin and Munnion were the names of the two Ravens that attended the Norse god Odin.

The Frigga VTOL was used as a primary chassis. The Frigga was fast and had enough space to be easily adapted.

A Radar Dome was mounted above the wing for extra sensor capability, and to allow the VTOL to keep low and still peek over trees and hills with the top-mounted sensor pod. The Munnion Scout VTOL may carry one Recon stand.

The Hugin may not carry any infantry. Both are considered Forward Observers.

A Hugin that is a Battalion, Regimental or Brigade commander may call orbital strikes if



By RICHARD LECLERCQ

available. While it is traditional to escort a command vehicle, quite often the Hugin will be deployed independently, relying on its speed for protection.

Identical in outward appearance to each other, it is easy to modify a Frigga to be a Hugin or a Munnion.

Use a pin vice and a 1/16-inch bit to drill a small hole in the top of the Frigga, in the top center of the fuselage.

Center a thumbtack to represent the radar dome.

It is possible to add a "radar dome" to an existing Frigga, and still use the figure as a Frigga later if desired.

Pop the thumbtack on and off, the small hole can be further hidden by a good camouflage paint job.

Be sure to use a good metal primer on the thumbtack, and be sure to paint the top, bottom, and pin.

The attached data card is a modification of the Loki Data Card.

Point values are estimates. The Vehicle prototype and data card are not official.

(Datacards are included in the Attachments folder)

EA Zeus class strike boats

By ALEX KETTLE

DURING the re-construction in the years after the Minbari war, the EA high command adopted a policy of building large numbers of the very capable Omega Destroyer design and using fighters to fill in the gaps in the line of battle.

It was soon determined that fighters, while capable and dangerous in large numbers, were incapable of handling all missions, and if in insufficient numbers would quickly fall prey to massed anti-fighter fire. The EA command decided that what was needed was a short range strike ship,

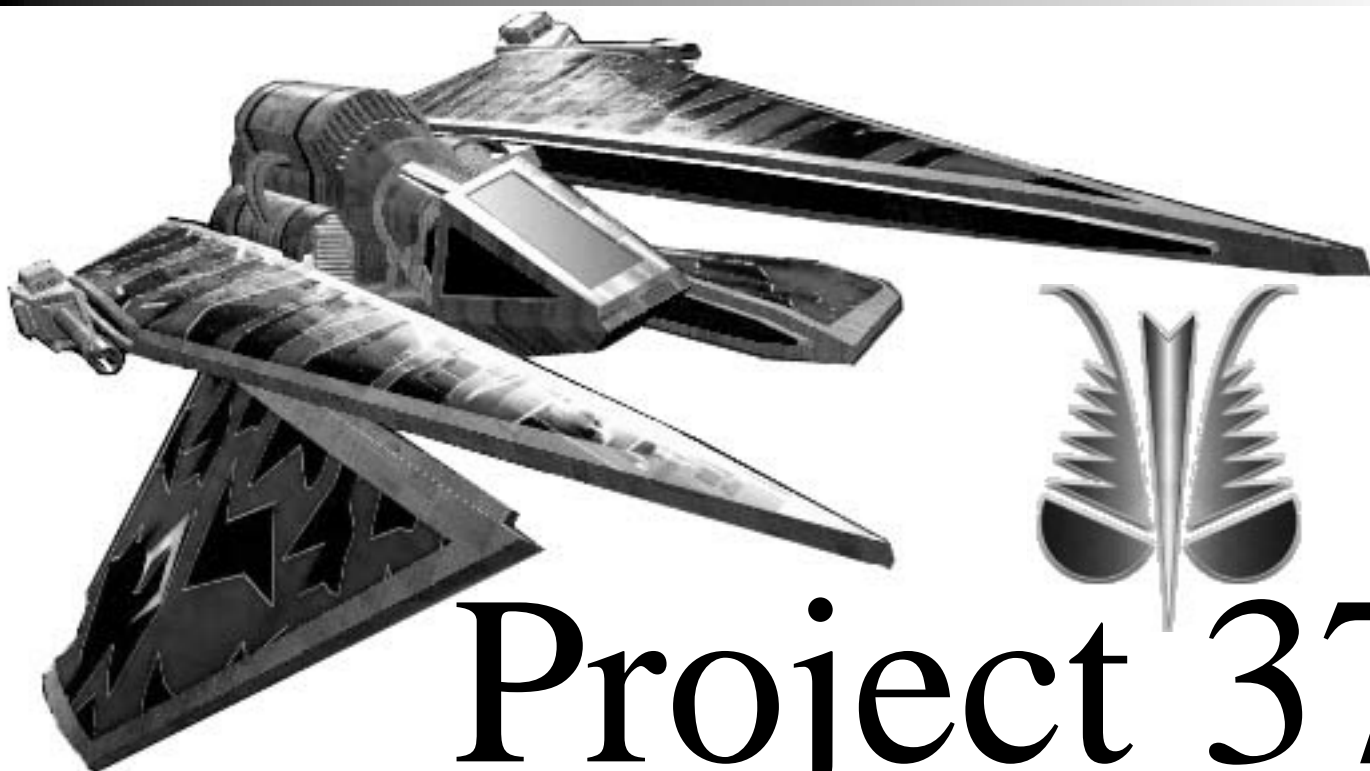
highly maneuverable and capable of keeping up with a wing of strike fighters to offer them additional support and assist in strikes against enemy capital ships.

What they came up with was an LCV design that carried a significant amount of firepower in the form of a pair of medium pulse cannons, but lacked the speed of the LCVs found in other forces. While initial prototypes showed that these ships were fast enough to move with fighter groups (but only barely as most of the available power was shunted to weapons) and could do a good deal of damage to larger ships and fighter groups, the limited arcs of its main weapons left these ships with a significant blind spot. Making matters worse, with such a small frame, EA engineers were unable to mount a

useful sensor array, causing even more problems against smaller enemy ships, which were to be one of its primary targets.

EA LCV - LCV Hull

2 medium pulse cannons mounted one to each side with a forward centerline arc, each MPC bears forward centerline and 60 degrees to each side. Also one primary 360 MK-I interceptor. Sensors should be about 1 point below nearest rival, thrust about 2 below.



Project 37

MULTI-ROLE FIGHTER PROGRAM

By **DIOGENES and
ROMAN ALEXANDER PERNER**

THE DESTRUCTION of the Narn military forces by the Centauri was almost complete. What little had managed to escape was committed to the Shadow War.

By the time the devastated home world was liberated in 22xx, very little of the Narn War Machine remained.

But key manufacturing centers and shipyards had, somehow, survived.

Massive production campaigns were put in place that saw the military reconstruction given maximum priority. Civilian programs would have to wait.

Most of this production effort went into building G'Quan hulls in a variety of variants.

But there was a need for a new fighter.

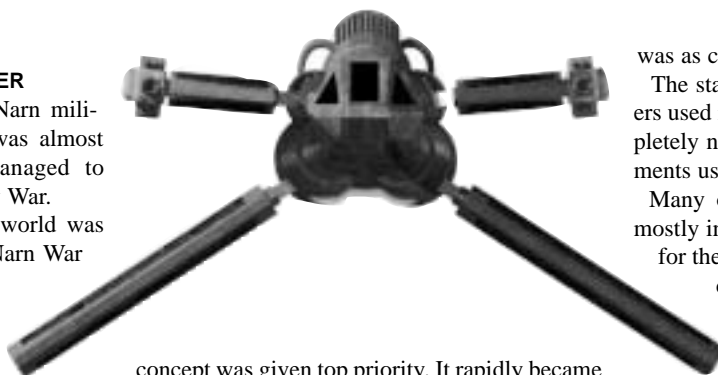
The Frazi was on the edge of obsolescence. Despite its firepower and armour, it had been regularly outmatched. And, with its economy in ruins, Narn did not have the resources to build a variety of single-role craft.

As with many of the League and minor races, the Narns had been greatly impressed by the sheer firepower and flexibility of Earthforce's Thunderbolt.

Narn's fighter manufacturers were given the task of producing an equivalent multi-role fighter. Given the emergency nature of the program, a decade-old heavy fighter concept was re-examined. Project 37. The Tor'Eth.

Unfortunately for the Regime, the Centauri had won the war before the first prototypes could be finished. Fortunately for the Regime, the incomplete prototype was at Bor'Goth, where it was safe from the Centauri.

Along with several other designs, the Tor'Eth



concept was given top priority. It rapidly became a favourite because it was already in advanced stages of testing.

Since fighters could be constructed much quicker and cheaper than starships, significant numbers could be quickly assembled into a fighting force. The atmospheric capability of Project 37 meant it could be built in factories on a planet's surface and stationed on planetary garrisons. In great enough numbers they could take down even the biggest enemy ship - just what the weak defence forces needed.

But... Narn's military leaders wanted it to do even more...

PROJECT 37 STRIKE FIGHTER

Project 37 resulted from observations the Narn made during the Dilgar and EA-Minbari wars about the effectiveness of fighter ballistics.

They were impressed.

At first they built the Light Ion Torpedo (LIT) for the Tarza, but soon thereafter the warleaders decided that they would need a better fighter to keep up with other races (especially after seeing the EA's Badger in action).

So the designers at Bor'Goth started Project 37 under instructions to create an attack-fighter that

was as capable a ballistic platform as any.

The starting point was two of the LIT launchers used in the Tarza design married with a completely new hull built with technological refinements used in the Frazi.

Many of the radical features of this design, mostly included because of the designer's desire for the new fighter to be atmospheric capable, caused a degree of controversy in military and political circles.

But this debate was overshadowed by the devastation of the new war with the Centauri.

PROJECT 37B MULTI-ROLE PROPOSAL

The Narn military was screaming for everything. They wanted an interceptor. They wanted a dogfighter. They wanted strike fighters. They wanted bombers.

And they wanted them now.

A multi-role fighter was the best Narn's industry could offer.

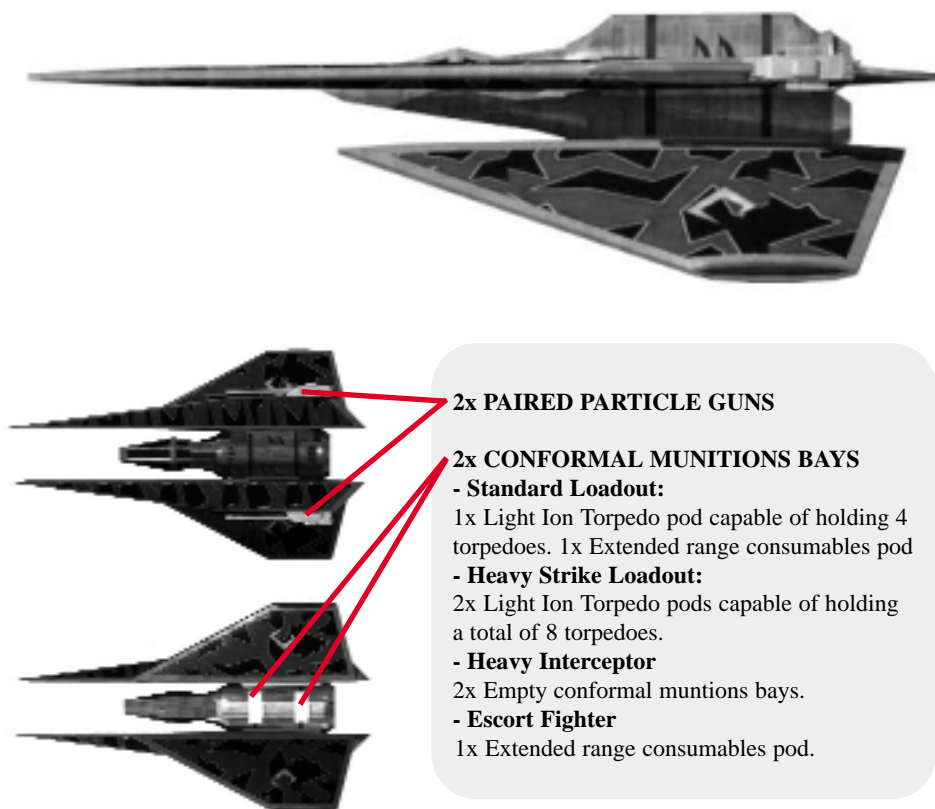
New requirements called for a fighter able to operate from roughly prepared bases on a planet's surface as well as from a starship's cramped docking bays. This was born from simple necessity. Too few ships existed to carry them.

This broad range of requirements called for the ability to conduct fighter, attack, recon and training missions.

At the same time the craft needed simple to maintain avionics and flight systems because of the conscript nature of Narns' shattered forces.

Project 37's designers realised their design had potential to be more than just a strike fighter. They knew its weight would be significantly reduced if the LIT launchers could be removed - leaving behind a fast and well-armed fighter-

NARN FIGHTER PROGRAM:



grade hull. The answer seemed obvious: modify the Tarza's LIT launchers into a modular design.

This would allow other "stores" packs to be designed to slot into the two new conformal bays - including recon equipment, extended range consumables, electronic warfare equipment...

The task proved more difficult than originally envisaged. The Tor'Eth was a very compact fighter for its size. Significant numbers of systems had to be re-routed and redesigned to keep its "clean" configuration.

Even so, the added structural weight of these new adaptive systems mean the Tor'Eth will rarely be capable of flying with its full theoretical complement of eight torpedoes.

DESIGN FEATURES

The Tor'Eth utilises a "double-dart" arrangement for its atmospheric control surfaces and weapon pylons. These sloped surfaces are more than just wings, however. Inside are a variety of items including sensors, fuel and munitions.

The main "underwings" are hinged, allowing them to be raised to the horizontal position for surface landings.

The smaller "overwings" hold the main gun armament at their extremities and house recessed sensor suites in their "sharp" fronts. An added advantage of this overwing design for an atmospheric fighter are the powerful vortices it generates, projecting them over the underwing control surfaces to make the craft very manoeuvrable.

Like the Gorith, the Tor'Eth was given an independent cockpit pod on a pontoon extending from the main hull. This was to separate the pilot from the engines and provide an emergency survival capsule in event of battle damage.

The main fuselage is little more than three

engines strapped together. While efficient in maintaining an overall small front-and-rear profile for the fighter, the tradeoff is a reduction in storage space for atmospheric and other consumables.

ARMAMENT

Two paired particle guns are the Tor'Eth's basic standard armament. These guns have a good rate of fire and damage potential, easily comparable to most other races.

With the fighter in a "clean" condition, the absence of heavy missiles mean the Tor'Eth should be able to hold its own in combat against all but the most advanced fighters.

The ambitious option of carrying eight Light Ion Torpedoes is yet to be proven in combat. If the Tor'Eth was to be "bounced" by enemy fighters in this situation, it would have very little chance of survival.

Debate continues on as to whether only one of the two conformal weapons bays should be equipped to hold a LIT pack in production models. But the prototype is being fitted out to original specifications.

The modular weapons bays provide the Tor'Eth with great future adaptability and expandability.

Already sensor and range-extension pods have been designed to give the fighter enhanced recon ability and endurance.

There is also talk of creating conformal gun pods to increase the fighter's ground-attack strafing ability. Holding arms for free-fall bombs could also be fitted. However, no development work has yet been begun on these suggestions.

(SCS is in the Attachments Folder)

Tor'Eth Origins

We are not certain who originally drew this amazingly lethal looking Narn fighter-bomber.

However, it is most likely to have originated in one of the many efforts to modify the tactical space combat game Homeworld to suit a Babylon 5 universe. Or it could have come out of the fertile imaginations lurking in places like the Babylon 5 Modellers Guild.

The Meshweaver internet website, which holds several excellent fan-created Babylon 5 designs, credits the original design and high resolution 3D model to Alan Hart.

What I do know is that I first encountered this lethal little vessel in the Narn-Centauri war Homeworld mod at the Great Wars internet site.

It is not an entirely original design. It draws inspiration from the Thunder Fighters of the 1980s television series Buck Rogers. It also has some loose resemblance to fighter types found in Renegade Legion.

No matter what its origins, it is a fighter that captures the essence of Narn aesthetics and deserves to be played in Babylon 5 wars.

Several attempts have been made to create appropriate SCSs for this fighter.

As always, Babcom leaves it up to you to decide which is best.

Several other versions of this fighter can be found at the following web-site. They are worth looking at:

<http://hyperion.mystarship.com/b5w/narn/toreth.htm>

MIGHT against the NIGHT

By NIKOLAS KOUMOUNDOUROS

IN THE middle of the 13th century the universe seemed to be heading towards a nexus. Rumors of ancient beings stirring from eon long slumbers were surfacing. Races were engaged in petty conflicts that all seemed to be escalating to minor and full scale wars.

It was, even though few suspected anything, the beginning of yet another Shadow war. Conflicts that should have been resolved seemed to get out of hand. The Minbari got involved without even realizing it, when they committed to help one of their minor allies that was being harassed by what would prove to be one of the Shadows' influenced races.

During this time, the Minbari operated a sizable navy consisting of a large number of HCVs that would eventually evolve into the modern Tinashi. Along with these HCVs, was a smaller number of capital sized cruisers and some fleet carriers which employed a medium sized fighter that could be described as the Tishat's distant ancestor.

These ships operated antimatter weaponry along with molecular weapons that were being developed from reverse engineered weapons that had recently fallen into Minbari hands after a series of minor skirmishes with the Yolu. Thankfully that situation was diffused, and the two races later became the two most powerful of the alliance that fought the Shadow influenced races. During this time of increased unrest, the Minbari pursued vig-

orously an extensive program to boost their fleets' effectiveness. Key among the plans in this program, was the introduction of a new class of a heavy capital ship armed with a multitude of weapons and carrying no less than 24 fighters. The class was named the Sharoon, after the name of an influential admiral and hero.

THE SHAROON WARCUISER

This ship was the first of the long line of WarCruisers that eventually evolved into the modern Sharlin. At first glance it doesn't look that different and it actually isn't in its' general configuration. Where it's different was in its weapons layout, system capabilities and endurance, which were inferior to its modern era counterpart. Six Molecular Agitators comprised the main armament of the Sharoon. This was a weapon the Minbari developed when they reverse engineered the Yolu Molecular Disruptors. It did share the MD's armor reduction ability but it scored less damage and had worse fire control and a slower rate of fire. In its' defense it had better range and can be fired sustained, which was problematic as its high power requirements strained the reactor of the Sharoon. The four Antimatter Converters the Sharoon carried were in a configuration not unlike the later Sharaal, providing heavy hitting power at close ranges, if the somewhat lumbering Warcruiser managed to get close

to the enemy. Ten Fission cannons, the precursors of the modern Fusion cannon, provided fast rate of fire and anti-fighter capabilities. These were very similar to the Fusion cannons having slightly worse range and damage characteristics along with somewhat less able anti-fighter targeting.

The hull of the Sharoon, was very similar to the Sharlin's, being a bit less sturdy, and less well armored. A significant difference compared to modern Minbari vessels was the absence of the Jammer system. In its place the more primitive Stealth system could be found, that allowed lock-ons, but decreased the accuracy of enemy weapons as ranges increased. The sensor suite was superior to anything the Minbari had fielded till then (and in fact superior to most found in ships of other races even today) but inferior to those found in modern Minbari vessels both in capabilities and durability. The design remained unchanged for almost two centuries with a single exception: around 1380 the Fission cannon was replaced, in what would be the first of many fleet-wide modernization programs, by the newly developed Fusion cannon.

Mid 15th Century: THE SHAROOL PROTOTYPE

A couple hundred years after the Sharoon, a big breakthrough occurred in Minbari sensor tech, or more exactly counter-sensor tech: the invention of



ORIGINS AND EVOLUTION: THE MINBARI WAR CRUISERS

the jammer. The new system was installed in all Minbari vessels in record time as it increased their survivability and made them nearly unhittable at long ranges. At the same time the Minbari were able to complete their reverse engineering of the Yolu Molecular Disruptors and soon started retrofitting the vast majority of their warships with it. Its' superior damage, fire control and faster rate of fire more than made up for its shorter range, especially when the introduction of the Jammer was taken into account, which significantly decreased or even eliminated the advantage held by races that fielded longer ranged weapons. At the same time and using technology used in the jammer, a miniaturised version of the Stealth system was developed for use in fighters.

This upgraded design saw extensive use in the Garmak War and would remain the foremost Minbari warship throughout the span of time that was characterized by the emergence of the Centauri as a major Galactic power, and during the war with the Wendan Horde.

Mid 20th century: THE SHARAAL PROTOTYPE

At this time the Minbari were testing their first prototype fighters of what would later evolve into the Nial. A new upgrade was necessary for the Warcruisers, that by this time had become the backbone of the Minbari fleet, slowly replacing over the centuries the smaller capital ships and HCVs as the main ships of the line for the Minbari Federation's Navy.

This extensive retrofitting led most of the Warcruisers back to the docks and took almost a century to be implemented fleetwide. One reason, was the extensive modifications that would allow the fielding of heavy fighters in the future. The other was the extensive changes that the introduction of an upgraded sensor suite required, and the use of improved armoring that was deemed necessary in a long period of unrest and war that followed the fall of the Centauri Republic and Orieni Empire. This program along with the introduction of jammer equipped fighters, maintained the Minbari navy's position as the dominant force for centuries to come.

2051: THE SHARLIN PROTOTYPE

Since the miracle-like appearance of the Babylon 4 station during the previous Shadow war, the Minbari were experimenting with laser technology based on data acquired from the station's databanks. Nevertheless, they were never completely satisfied with their end results and so never fielded their lasers in large numbers. A breakthrough was made in the early 21st century, when a worker caste scientist that was perusing data collected from the war with the Wendan, had a moment of inspiration that led to the evolution of the Neutron Lasers. The first implementation of this technology that saw wide use was the

Neutron Cannon, a weapon very similar to the modern Neutron laser. Its main difference was its slower rate of fire, worse fire control and slightly less damage potential. It was nonetheless a huge leap ahead of the Molecular Disruptors then in use, as the main warship heavy armament in terms of range. This was deemed extremely important as other races were by now fielding weapons with better range characteristics than the Molecular disruptors. Its' capability to be fired in either sustained mode for greater damage or piercing to allow for quick crippling of enemy ships were the icing on the cake that decided the issue. Two Sharaal cruisers were quickly converted to use the new weapon system along with a new and improved sensor suite. The results were spectacular with the ship able to cripple enemy ships at ranges where itself was unhittable, thanks to the jammer's effect. This was a decisive test that led to a massive doctrinal change towards long range combat in Minbari fleet operations that would last during the next two centuries of isolation, the EA war and the conflicts that led to the creation of the Interstellar Alliance.

A new fleet-wise modernization plan was organized, with the by now thousands of Warcruisers (many of them centuries old) massively overhauled with new and more powerful engines, better and more sturdy reactors and command electronics, followed by the fitting of improved armor suites. Before it was even implemented, further refinement of the Neutron cannon gave at first the Light Neutron Laser (a medium sized version of its namesake) and finally the Neutron Laser as we know it: better ROF and damage made it a clear winner.

The introduction of the Nial fighter at the same time, gave the Minbari an unchallenged superiority fighter that could double up as a ship assault design utilizing its jammer and its three guns. The combination of this newest incarnation of the Warcruiser design with this new fighter would enable the Minbari navy to maintain its position as the strongest among the younger races till the formation of the Interstellar Alliance.

(PDFs for several of these prototypes are included in the Attachments folder)

Shahinta HCV

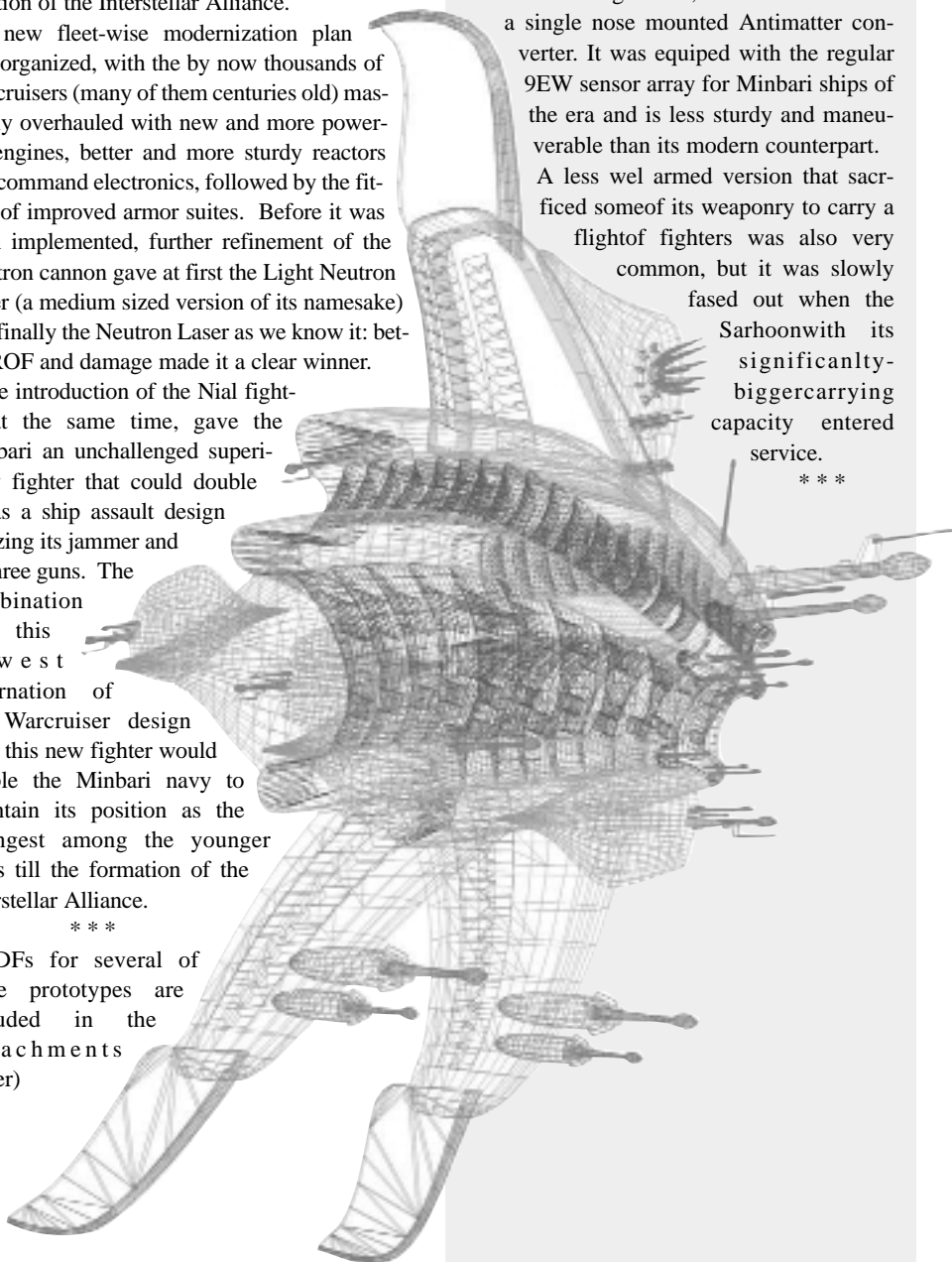
AT THE time of the introduction of the Sharron class Warcruisers, the Minbari were using a large fleet of HCVs headed by smaller numbers of smaller capital ships. The capital ships were designed for flagship and support roles (ELINT and fleet carriers among them) but a streamlined HCV was the main workhorse of their fleet, operated in a handful of different configurations some of them sacrificing firepower for carrying a small number of fighters.

The Shahinta is the version of the early Minbari HCV that was fielded in great numbers during the start of the previous Shadow war. Its resemblance to the Tinashi is unmistakable and is only reasonable as it's the Tinashi's distant ancestor.

Its armament is comprised by the same weapons as the Sharoon :

3 Molecular Agitators , fission cannons and a single nose mounted Antimatter converter. It was equipped with the regular 9EW sensor array for Minbari ships of the era and is less sturdy and maneuverable than its modern counterpart.

A less well armed version that sacrificed some of its weaponry to carry a flight of fighters was also very common, but it was slowly phased out when the Sarhoon with its significantly bigger carrying capacity entered service.



When Hollywood says “re-imagine”, what they’re trying not to say is “remake”

I RECENTLY caught up with genre television writer and former executive producer of 'Star Trek: Deep Space Nine' Ron Moore and quizzed him about his plans for the proposed remake of the 'Classic' Battlestar Galactica series of the late seventies. Below is a copy of the E - Mail questions and answers session I had with Ron:

You said in the recent interview on zap2it that you are looking to go back to the beginning with Galactica. What sort of changes can we expect to see?

"I'm in the middle of working on the script and I'm making many of those creative decisions right now, so I'll have to be vague and give you what won't be a very satisfying answer. The basis of the mini-series will be a retelling of the origin story; that is, the events that cause Galactica and the fugitive fleet to begin their journey. There will be familiar characters from the original show, and new ones as well. I'm trying to flesh out the backstory of what led up to these cataclysmic events as well as round out many of the characters and their relationships. I can tell you that both the studio and the network were very happy with the outline and that things are going exceptionally well with this project so far." "Some of the things we WON'T be doing: "Galactica 90210." This will not be a show dedicated to sex and wacky teenage hijinks. Battlestar Galactica without a battlestar named Galactica. This has to be one of the craziest rumors I've heard. An all-male cast. Quite the contrary. There will be a strong female component to the show, including more women pilots than in the original."

In a recent interview with SFX Magazine. You were quoted by the magazine as having said the following: "Doing a sequel crossed my mind," says the writer Ronald D Moore,

By IAN M CULLEN
of SciFi Pulse
scifipulse.scifiwebs.com

The Battlestar Galactica "Re-Imagining" is due to begin shooting on the 15 of July.

late of Deep Space Nine and Roswell, "but I just wasn't interested in that so much as I was in going back and starting over. Part of it is on a practical level. I think if you're going to pick up from where you left off, you basically reduce the audience to those who know and love the original already. Let's face it, Battlestar Galactica is just not Star Trek and we're not going to pretend that it is this giant pop-cultural phenomenon where you literally could pick up 75 years later and continue going."

On this I am inclined to agree with you to a point, but feel that a lot of Battlestar fans may have taken the above quote out of context, and wondered if you would like to address this further. I also feel that you're maybe under-estimating the BG Fan Base a little here.

"The quote is dealing with two different subjects: one is the creative decision to remake the show and the other is the practical considerations of attracting an audience. Let's talk about them one at a time." "The creative decision came first. Basically, I saw more inherently interesting to me as a writer with going back and redoing the initial story and launching a whole new version of Galactica than I did with picking up the original narrative years later. That's not to say that there's anything inherently wrong with doing a sequel, it's just not a direction I was interested in pursuing, and as a writer, there has to be something in the material that interests me."

"In my mind, one of the factors that argued most strongly against doing a sequel, was the fact that Lorne Greene and John Colicos are no longer with us, and hence, any sequel would have to forego using both Adama and Baltar. Yes, you could promote someone else to command Galactica and yes, you could create a new villain, but to me, it's sort of like saying you could do the first Trek movie without Kirk & McCoy as long as you promote someone else to command the Enterprise and create another doctor."

"To my way of thinking, those are pretty fundamental cast and character changes and personally, I'd rather go back to the beginning and retell the whole saga with both Adama and Baltar intact. In my opinion, they're at the heart of the show and I can't imagine Galactica without them."

"When I sat down and watched the original pilot again, I was struck by the underlying premise and how much stronger a piece it could be today. The premise of a bolt-from-the-blue attack which wipes out an entire civilization has an entirely different emotional resonance today in the post 9/11 world than it did in the 1970s. In those days, all-out nuclear war may have been a chilling sword of Damocles which hung over our heads, but we had not gone through the emotional trauma of 9/11 which continues to reverberate through our society to this very day."

"I think that retelling the origin story has value. I think it speaks more directly to our lives and our current experiences and will have a greater relevance than picking up the story many years later. That's my gut instinct, and basically that's what a writer does, he follows his instincts and hopes they lead him in the right direction."

"Now, on a practical level, a dollars and cents, commercial level, I think that doing a remake simply has a greater potential audience than a sequel. By definition, a sequel is a continuation



OPPORTUNITY: A remake of the original *Galactica* pilot, which depicted a surprise attack on civilian worlds, was "especially relevant" after the events of September 11, says producer Ron Moore.

of a story. It presupposes a familiarity with the narrative thus far. That in turn, tends to keep new viewers away because they'll feel like "I don't know what's going on." You can re-run the original pilot all you want, but you're still going to be fighting to bring in new viewers who may not have a good memory (or any) of the original show. (And let's be clear here -- I'm talking about the general audience, not the fan base.)"

"When I made the comparison to *Star Trek*, I was referring primarily to this issue. When *Trek* returned in 1979, it had only been off the air for about a decade, and it had become a pop cultural icon. People knew what transporters and phasers were and because of the episodic nature of the original series, there wasn't a complicated backstory that the audience had to understand in order to enjoy the movie "sequel."

"With *Galactica*, the show's been off the air for over twenty years, and there is a very specific, very involved backstory that you've got to know in order to enjoy the show. Who are these people? Are they from Earth? What happened to their planet(s)? Who are the Cylons? Why did they attack? Why are they still chasing them? Who was this Adama? Who was Baltar? Why are they looking for Earth?"

"I'm not saying it's impossible to answer all these questions in a sequel, but that still doesn't address the problem of getting them to watch in the first place. And even then, you've still got to fill in an awful lot of backstory. To me, it's better to start fresh with the audience and let them experience the key moments first hand."

You mentioned to Zap2it that you were a fan of BSG when you were a kid. Thinking back to then, what were the things that sold you on the show, and what aspects of the show did you not like so much. Which in part must have helped make your mind up on the proposed re imagining. Also which characters did you relate to in the 70s show.

"At the time, I was jazzed that there was a

high-profile science fiction show on TV at all. There hadn't really been anything since *Trek*, (not counting *Space: 1999*, which was syndicated) and I was just happy to have what was sort of a *Star Wars*/*Star Trek* hybrid on every week. I liked the VFX, the action, and I kinda dug the fact that it had a pretty dark premise."

"Discretion being the better part of valor, I will politely decline the invitation to start pointing out flaws in the old show."

"As far as characters, I guess I was most interested in Adama and Baltar, and as I said above, that definitely influenced my thinking on doing a remake."

Was there ever any discussions about a prequel to BSG at the studio, because I remember a scene in the original three hour pilot where Tigh and Adama were discussing when they used to fly in the vipers. There was also quite a lot of back story in the original that would make good material to work on. I also think that if you decided on a prequel it could well cause you less trouble with the fan base and you would still get the newer uninitiated viewers signing on for it as well. So am wondering if this angle has been thought about?

"We never discussed a prequel and I never considered doing one. As far as problems with the fan base... well, I respect the fan base enough to say that despite whatever controversy there may be right now, when it comes down to it, I believe there will be only one criteria in the end: Is the show any good? I cannot imagine a scenario where a good show gets rejected by the fan community. It just won't happen. If it's good, the fans will accept it and if it's bad they'll reject it. They're not idiots, they're not going to boycott something of quality just out of spite, and I firmly believe the new *Battlestar Galactica* is going to be something of quality." I Would like to thank Ron D Moore for taking time out of his busy schedule to discuss this with us."

B5 DVD release

IT HAS been inadvertently leaked early that *Babylon 5* is to be released on DVD later this year.

An innocent email by a US captioning firm to a B5 mailing list asking for copies of scripts for season one episodes let the cat out of the bag.

JMS, who had previously remained tight-lipped about any DVD news, took that as an "excuse" to spill the beans.

"Season One will be out in a boxed set this Fall," he said.

"They're going to be including at minimum two commentaries from me, probably on *Signs and Portents* and *Chrysalis* (it's a matter of how much time and energy I can give to it given that there's no fees involved and I'm in the midst of *Jeremiah*), and if possible, *Babylon Squared*, maybe *Sky Full of Stars*.

"They'd also like to film an on-camera intro by me (but I guess folks will buy it anyway, even with that particular horror included). They're pulling together a lot of stuff on this release so that there are plenty of extras this time around, now that the value of the DVDs has been shown by the first release. "

Rising Stars

SPIKE Seldin, president of production for Top Cow comics, told the Comics2Film Web site that sibling screenwriters Anthony and Joe Russo have signed on to adapt J. Michael Straczynski's *Rising Stars* comic series for the screen. *Babylon 5* creator Straczynski wrote a draft of the script, the site reported.

JMS later posted that the movie script he wrote was now "out of his hands", and was going through the "usual" rewrite and counter-rewrite process that studios seem to insist upon these days.

Rising Stars tells the story of superheroes who arrive on Earth in a flash of light in 1969 in the midwestern town of Pederson, Ill., and how they interact with a world that has never known such beings.

Prototypes II

DUE to the number of submissions, this edition may not contain your prototype. However, we will be publishing a second Prototypes edition to cover the remainder of the publishable ships.

July will include:

- EA Medusa
- EA Arctic
- Narn Geron
- And ships from the Abbai, Renkorr and Grome - among others



Edited by CHRIS NASIPAK

THE EARTH Alliance was one of the first nations to benefit from the technology exchanges implemented by the Interstellar Alliance.

Ships were equipped with internal gravity, maintenance of many systems was simplified, while many logistical issues were greatly reduced. In the wake of these developments, several new ship designs were deployed by EarthForce. The first of these was the famed Warlock "Advanced Destroyer". It was soon joined by several others: the Apollo bombardment cruiser, Delphi scout, and Cronos attack boat.

Numerous concerns were raised over these new designs. Many claimed these new designs to be too expensive, others claimed not enough improvement over traditional designs, while still others claimed them to be too dependant on alien technologies. A few insisted. EarthForce had to answer their detractors. The High Command proposed a series of wargames, pitting the new units against not merely the old, but against the opponents they were likely to face in the future.

For both of the following scenarios, utilize the following EarthForce Advanced Squadron:

- 1x Warlock Advanced Destroyer
- 24x Thunderbolt Assault Fighters

- 24x Basic Fighter Missile
- 48x Dogfight Missile
- 1x Delphi Advanced Scout
- 1x Cronos Attack Frigate
- 1x Apollo Bombardment Cruiser
- 15x Flash missile
- 14x Chaff missile
- 15x HARM missile
- 15x Heavy missile
- 15x Long-Range missile
- 5x Piercing missile

SCENARIO ONE: THE OLD GUARD

Setup: Place two maps long-side together to form a 42x60 playing area. Each player may choose whether to enter from off-map or by jump point. In either case the entry hex of each ship must be recorded secretly. Player A will fight using the EF Advanced Squadron detailed above. Player B should use the following squadron, demonstrating the best of the older EF designs:

- 1x Omega-Alpha
- 24x Starfury-Aurora
- 1x Oracle-Gamma
- 1x Artemis-Beta
- 2x Olympus-Delta
- 1x Hyperion-Theta
- 6x Starfury-Aurora

- 1x Sagittarius-Beta
- 20x Flash missile
- 20x Chaff missile
- 20x HARM missile
- 22x Heavy missile
- 21x Long-Range missile

Victory is defined by the disablement or destruction of all opposing vessels.

For the second scenario, utilize the same EarthForce Advanced Squadron, but pit it against a matching 7,000-point force from another race, such as those provided by this month's Battle Force competitors:

A Page from the Past (Galen82)

From: Satai Kudroni
To: Sha Alyt Meral, Commander
Fi' Ral Clan, Religious Caste.

To assist our Human allies in the testing of their prototype ships, the Religious Caste has been allowed by the Grey Council to send a small fleet to the Earth Alliance Iotia Plains testing grounds for several simulated war games since the Warrior Caste has refused this "honour". These simulations are to take place in three days, and would allow the Earth Alliance to gather information and results regarding the combat effectiveness against other Alliance ships. Our vessels are by far, the most superior the Earth



Alliance has ever encountered. Thus our presence was requested by the EA. They would like to see whether their new ships could stand up to a fight with ours. I doubt it. Your orders are clear. Jump into the Iotia System, and hold there till further orders are given from the EA Iotia Station. There may be some resentment towards us from other factions in the EA. So try to be diplomatic about things. The Narns and Centauri governments have already sent their fleets there, so be on your way. May Valen go with you.

Fleet Composition:

1 Sharlin War cruiser "Valeria" :1825pts
2 Tinashi War frigates "Neron'Zal , Lezal"
:1700pts
2 Whitestars "WS12, WS29" :1500pts
1 Tradana Combat Frigate "Katal" :575pts
12 Nials :1272pts
Total points: :6872pts

Tactics of this fleet is simple. First turn, keep out of missile range and full paint any missile ships with the Tinashis and Whitestars, and Tradana. The Sharlin would go after the Warlock if any. Nials would stay close in the first few turns. After turn one, all ships full defensive. Whitestars would power up the Molecular Pulsars to go fighter hunting, escorted by the Nials. The fleet should attempt to keep range as long as possible. Once the enemy closes in, use fusion cannons on the Sharlin and Tinashis to damage them. Use the Whitestars to take out any crippled or severely damaged ships. Tradana to provide escort to the fleet. Nials continue on fighter hunting.

Rapiers and Broadwords (Grand Inquisitor Dask)

The Balosian government was quite happy to participate in wargames with their friends and allies within the Earth Alliance. Earth Alliance had aided them greatly in rebuilding after the Dilgar war and their new ship designs were only made possible through collaboration with Earth engineers. Wishing to give the best showing possible in the event, the Balosian fleet was carefully chosen to meet and exceed Earth Alliance expectations of their capabilities.

1 Lahas Command Cruiser, the Tressarus: 765
1 Seffensa Attack Cruiser, the Krossuran: 625
2 Erlassan Scouts, the Arkassa and the Irraffen: 1,000
4 Kraasus Destroyers, the Drushu and the Rellamar: 2,200
48 Shadras, Scale and Frill defense squadrons and
Fang and Talon attack squadrons: 2,400

Total: 6,990

Tactics: The Balosian Navy is built around fast-firing sniper units and this is reflected in their weapons. Nothing in your fleet has a rate of fire worse than 1 per 2 turns and this should be taken advantage of. You also will have better range than anything that's not armed with missiles, and that's where the scouts and your secondaries come in. Use the two scouts in a defensive role, jam the living hell out of those missiles! Use your range and superior rate of fire to pound from a distance as long as possible. Maneuver like a madman to keep that range advantage. I have half the fighters designated as screening forces to help you keep that advantage, but it's up to you whether or not to keep them defensive. If you choose to go offensive with all your fighters, I suggest hitting anything carrying missiles to the exclusion of all else, since missiles can negate your range advantage. When you're forced to close range (it's bound to happen) be prepared to sacrifice your destroyers to defend your cruisers but only endanger your scouts as a last resort. Good luck!

Squids On Patrol (Kizarvexis)

To: Wargames Control
From: Captain PH. Unnie
Pursant to Wargame guidelines provided in directive W68-332, OPFOR Task
Force J has been assembled. The basis for this engagement is that a large Pak'ma'ra convoy left EA space to return to Melat. The convoy had a celebration before leaving and unfortunately a, uh, food item that should have been on The List was served. The resulting bacterial infection and gastroenteritis (projectile vom.. well, it was nasty) left the Pak'ma'ra crew somewhat, uh, surly.

TF J.
1700 - 2 Pshul'shi Dreadnoughts
775 - 1 Thar'not'ak Plasma Cruiser
445 - 1 Urik'hal Fast Destroyer
450 - 1 Urik'tal Fast Escort
800 - 2 Ar'tees Battle Transports
630 - 2 Tra'shu'li Armed Liners
590 - 1 Resh'kas'u Light Carrier
500 - 1 Sim'tor'ka Survey Transport
850 - 17 Por'fa'tis Medium Fighters
260 - 1 Sho'bog'na Patroller
7000 points

TF J will assume a defensive posture with the scout providing additional defensive cover and close rapidly with the EA TF. TF J fighters will keep a close cap near the fleet. When TF J is in optimal range, they let fly their discontent.

Welcome to the Party, Earthers (Joaquin Hiero)

Bin'Tak 1250 (2 e-mines, 2 torp)
G'Quan x 2 1250 (4 e-mines)

G'Quonth	800 (2 torpedos)
Dag'Kar	750 (6 e-mines, 6 torpedos)
Sho'Kar	650
Thentus x 2	850
G'Karith	500
Gorith x 23	920

Narn High Command to Warleader Go'Tak:

We have recently received an official invitation from the Earth High Command. They want to test their newest vessels against other fleets, and it's an offer we can't refuse: it would provide invaluable tactical analysis of their new models, and how they could evolve in combat.

This is the relation of ships you will have, to use in the test run against them. We don't know the composition of the 'enemy' fleet, but the preliminary information given us that:

1.- The Apollo, their newest bombardment cruiser, has long range quick missile racks. It will be one of the biggest treats at distance. Take them down fast.

2.- The Warlock seems very capable to engage a Minbari Sharlin, and survive. Be very cautious with their main armament, the Heavy Particle Cannons. Once the main guns have been taken down, don't ignore the vessel: it has lots of weapons by every side, it doesn't seem to have any blind point.

3.- The new Elint vessel seems better than ours. It's not a surprise.

4.- And in last place, their new attack vessel, the Cronos, seems very dangerous at medium-short range. In this case, it doesn't seem a contradiction 'Earth' and 'fast'. Be careful with it.

If the earther has a fighter heavy fleet, use your e-mines to take the enemy fighters down at distance, and hammer the Apollos and Delphis from maximum possible range. If he uses a fighter light fleet, use the emines to take down the scout(s) and bombardment cruiser(s), and the Ion Torpedoes to attack them and the Warlock. Your Elint vessel is worse than the earther equivalent. Try to use it in disruption mode against any targeting of the Apollos against your Dag'Kar and/or Bintak. Hammer the Warlock with your lasers at distance. Engage it with the G'Quan's, G'Quonth and Bin'tak. No mercy.

Protect the Dag'Kar at all cost against enemy fighters. Certainly, it will be the priority target for their fighters, so use the Goriths and G'Karith for antifighter support. Use the Thentus to prevent possible flanking attacks for the Chronos frigates.

You have the distance advantage with your long range ballistic weapons. Maintain the distance if possible.

And good luck!

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of Babylon 5 Wars,
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GROPOS

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Centauri Prime's “good-old-days”

Review - Wars of the Centauri Republic
By ALEX ROBERTS

What they say:

Wars of the Centauri Republic covers the climactic campaign against the greatest external threat the Lion of the Galaxy ever faced: the implacable Orieni Empire, with its powerful motherships and speedy consorts.

WARS of the Centauri Republic is the latest installment for Agents of Gaming's Babylon 5 Wars product line. Unlike previous supplements, Wars of the Centauri Republic (WOCR) takes the reader back in time, to the years that helped the Centauri Republic form much of their fleet doctrine through to the 2250-60's era. This supplement covers the Centauri Republic's war with the Orieni Empire, which spanned the years 2001-2010.

The book begins with a very lengthy historical section similar in scope to the one provided in the Dilgar Invasion. Covering 22 pages, this section takes the reader through 10 years of ups and downs, political intrigues, and not a few surprises even a fan of Babylon 5's more advanced eras would enjoy. The writing on the whole is very good, with only a few moments of confusing grammar or not fully explained intros. It is however, clear that the history has been without exception, well thought out and planned down to the smallest detail. It is obvious that a lot of work has gone into this document, and that work has paid off in a book that is very enjoyable to read, as one follows the course of the war, both militarily and politically.

For those who are not interested solely in the Centauri or the Orieni, the historical section brings in a number of other races from time to time. Such races as the Drazi, Abbai, as well as another race that will certainly be a surprise for all present, though their ships for the era are not as yet provided (but hopefully will be in future supplements).

Following the historical section, are sections covering new rules such as unprofessional squadrons and poor crews, and refits (a clever option that allows one SCS to actually cover several different variants of the same hull, upgraded over the course of the war). The typical race specific sections are provided for the Orieni and Centauri, detailing their individual histories up to this point, as well as weapons technology and ship descriptions. Owners of the playtest pack will

quickly note that the Drazi, Roglons, and Usuuth did not make it into this book due to a lack of space, but perhaps they can be expected in the forthcoming Showdowns book for WOCR.

There are a total of 34 SCS's in this book, 17 of them covering the Orieni Empire, and 27 covering the Centauri Republic's fleets of the period. Counting refits, however, the actual number of useable ships is much larger than this. Regardless, there are certainly plenty of ships to allow players of either race a healthy selection of vessels for nearly any mission requirement. The weaponry is per the era, providing a number of new systems that were the forerunners of later systems, including for the Centauri the Sentinel Point Defense (precursor to the Guardian Array), the Imperial Laser, and for the Orieni a range of "new" laser, gauss, and railgun systems to outfit their fleets.

The most interesting weapon system however, is not really a weapon at all. Rather it is the Orieni's use of

Hunter-Killer fighters. These fighters are not equipped with weapons at all. Rather, they have improved ram values, and are used solely as controllable missiles, to smash into their targets and destroy them, just as Japanese Ohka craft were intended to be used during WWII. Even for those who love high tech gadgets, though not very high tech, these HK's should certainly provide a new and interesting toy to play with.

On the whole WOCR is an excellent product and in this reviewer's opinion well worth the money. Those who love older ships with lower tech weapons will find more vessels than they can use, which will hopefully

provide them and their groups plenty of enjoyment. For those who enjoy a good read, the history of the war is extensive and well thought out, and is a very enjoyable read. For those whose only love is the newest, biggest, baddest ship on the block, although this product is not necessarily geared towards that market segment, they may want to give the Orieni command ships a spin. Although not armed with Heavy Particle Cannons and EM shields, they can still pack quite a punch with their huge size and numerous Heavy Laser Lances, not to mention their Hunter-Killer fighters, which, though decidedly low tech, should bring a glimmer of enjoyment to anyone who likes to see things blow up.

All in all this book has something for nearly everyone, and is a nice addition to the Babylon 5 Wars line.

