

Babboom

BABYLINE 5 * FLEET ACTION * GROPOS

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PROTOTYPES 2

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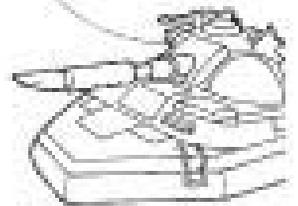
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Giving the GROPOS an eye in the sky



GROPOS
By "HARDLEC"



THE first ship in a class is usually a prototype, either a technology demonstrator or a test to see if the combination of systems and devices can be a ship and not a pile of technology. Sometimes a prototype will be the only example of a ship, but usually a ship will be called upon to serve, in active duty and in combat.

Vehicle prototypes are almost never called upon to serve in active duty. They will serve as museum pieces or be tested to destruction. Production examples are called upon for active duty. This is almost always after enough examples have been produced, and crews trained in them, to be effective military units. The exception to this is when an existing chassis is modified in some way, usually as a field expedient, and tested in combat before the bureaucrats have a chance to ruin it.

During the Earth Minbari War, the Minbari suffered at the hands of the EA ground forces. A field expedient was developed which modified a Seti missile into a reconnaissance drone. Later attempts to make this weapon an official part of the armory were thwarted by bureaucrats, who could not imagine field soldiers could be engineers. The drone reappeared in the Civil war, Shadow war, and Drakh war. The bureaucrats may still be the more difficult opponents, however.

A Seti missile has the warhead removed and the engine modified from reaching hypersonic speed in a short time to longer endurance. The targeting system is a sufficient sensor, and it already has secure communication. The major limit to the drone is that the sensor and the communication unit are both limited to the missile's designed range. Seti missiles are gravitic, not rocket powered and aerodynamic. They are nearly invisible, leave no trail, and can slow to a stop without falling like a brick. Attempts by other races to convert their missiles to drones have been unsuccessful.

Signature: 6
Profile: 12
Destroyed: 2
Speed: 12
Type: Hover; no high mode.

Target: D12

Crew Die: Use the Crew die of the friendly unit using the drone.

Spot/Search: D10/*

Range: 24 inches

Points: 12

The drone is NOT automatically spotted when it moves, however, its signature is reduced to 4. It suffers from artillery if it is in the area of effect.

There is only one drone allowed per command unit (company or battalion command). If there are more than one command units and more than one drone, the drones MAY NOT daisy chain. (i.e. Friendly unit is 24 inches from drone 1, drone 1 is 24 inches from drone 2, the enemy is 24 inches from drone 2)

The drone is activated and may move when the command unit is activated. The drone may only spot units within 24 inches of itself.

The command unit may use the drone search die and location from which to conduct spotting actions, if the drone is within 24 inches of the command stand or vehicle. These would be considered the command unit's spotting action(s)

Friendly units may use the drone to spot from (using the drone's location and spotting die but the unit's spotting actions,) to get line-of sight for indirect fire or pop-up attacks, or missile locks for missiles fired indirectly. The friendly unit must be within 24 inches of the drone. The target must be 24 inches from the drone as well.

MINIATURE: the Seti missile would be a football shape, about double the size of a gravnade. A simple square of card stock with a point in the center for the exact location will work. A straight pin with a large head can work as well. Bend the head 90 degrees (be careful, straight pins like to break rather than bend). A small square of card stock makes a good base. Trim the pin so that it stands about 1/2 inch above the table.

* * *

From the Galactica's engineroom...

REPORTS emerged in July that Tom DeSanto has been re-hired as a consultant to the new Sci-Fi Channel Battlestar Galactica mini-series.

Although Tom DeSanto's participation does not indicate that a continuation (rather than remake) of the original series will happen, the current production team is reported to be seriously considering the use of some of his earlier concept work, such as new Viper designs.

Also the original Battlestar Galactica ship design is being seriously considered, along with the original Viper and other designs. The new mini-series is also reported to focus more on how the Colonies interacted, introductions to the main characters, and the Colonials' plight as they struggle to escape the Cylon

sneak attacks which destroy the Colonies.

Apparently, the Sci-Fi Channel wants aspects of the storytelling to change, but the basic framework to remain intact. That means more focus on the love stories and hot headed friendships.

Of additional interest: Glen A. Larson has given his blessing to this new Battlestar Galactica show, although he is reported to have no direct involvement in the new mini-series.

The source mentioned that the Region 4 Battlestar Galactica DVD set (plus other regions in development) are going to contain major extras which focus on this new mini-series. The DVD sets are due mid-next year in Region 1, 2, and 4, if plans hold.

Quickplay scenario:

Squabbling infants

WHEN a freighter loaded down with Q-40 is crippled by an engine malfunction several small races send ships to secure the cargo. . .

Players

- 2-4

Set up

- Use a standard map. Deploy a standard civilian freighter within 3 hexes of the centre of the map, with a random facing. Players start in the corners of the map. If there are two players, they start in opposite corners.

Forces

- Players select one of the following fleets.

Alacan

- 1 Tacomi Patrol Cutter, 1 Azafac Armed freighter

Balosian

- 2 Resha frigates OR 2 Essusu Patrol Boats

Belt Alliance

- 1 close escort, 1 medium gunboat

Corillani

- 1 Conosti Patrol Frigate, 1 Nollita Tactical Frigate

Descari

- 3 Croscotu Frigates

EA

- 2 Laertes Police Corvettes

Mitoc

- 2 Jomic Frigates

Raider

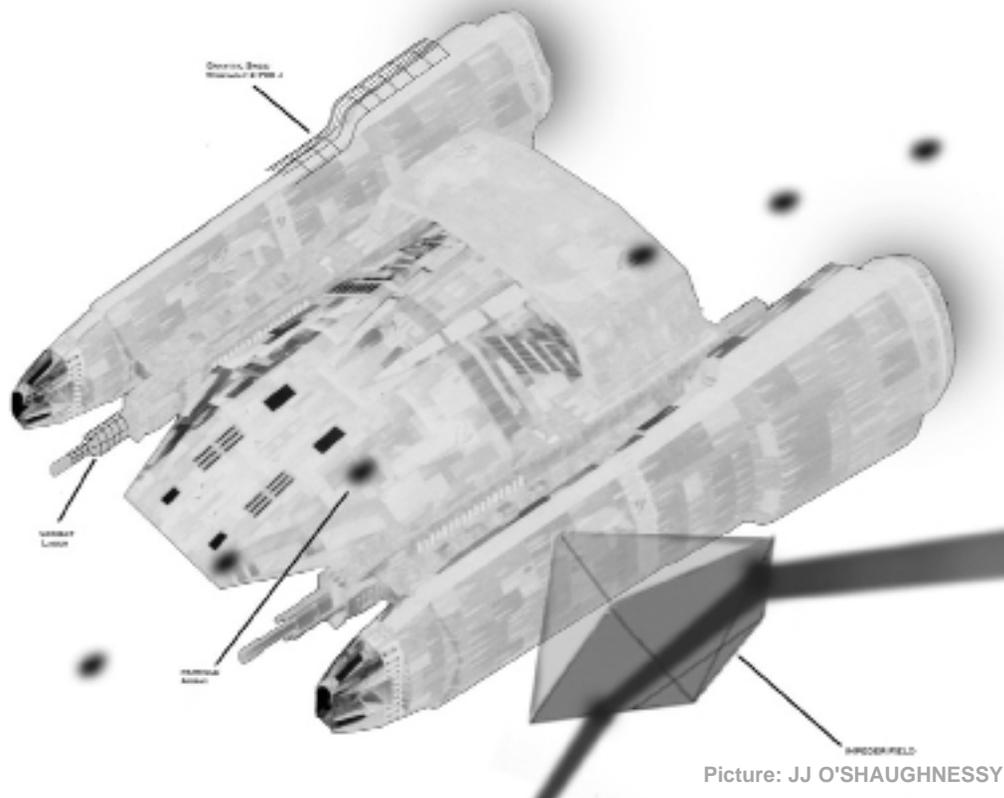
- 2 Xebec

Alternatively select 2-4 ships with a points cost totalling no more than 675 points.

Victory Conditions

The player left in control of the map, and the freighter, is the winner. If the freighter is destroyed, all the players lose.

Abbai armadillo



Picture: JJ O'SHAUGHNESSY

Lakara Prototype

By JJ O'SHAUGHNESSY

THE Lakara was designed to replace the aging Adrith cruiser as the main cruiser of the Abbai, creating a ship capable of mounting the new Combat Laser.

However the original, test design was a disappointment in many ways.

First, the Abbai attempted to give both total shield coverage and redundant shield systems (i.e. you lose one and another can take over that arc).

However, it was found that the shield generator could not handle the extra load safely, and the wide angle of shield generation reduced overall protection to a level that the Abbai simply could not accept.

Second, as the prototypes were undergoing their shakedown trials, the Quad Array became available. The ship in its current state simply could not mount

the new weapon. Therefore, the Abbai were forced to redesign the ship into the more familiar state visible today.

However the ship remains interesting as a footnote in the development of Abbai defence-ships, and the lessons learned were later to be put to good use in the Nakarsha Command cruiser.

This design heralds a great improvement in Abbai shield technology and may signal a fleet wide refit of the Lakara cruiser in the future. As for the prototypes, most were destroyed in the Dilgar war, but at least one is supposed to have survived.

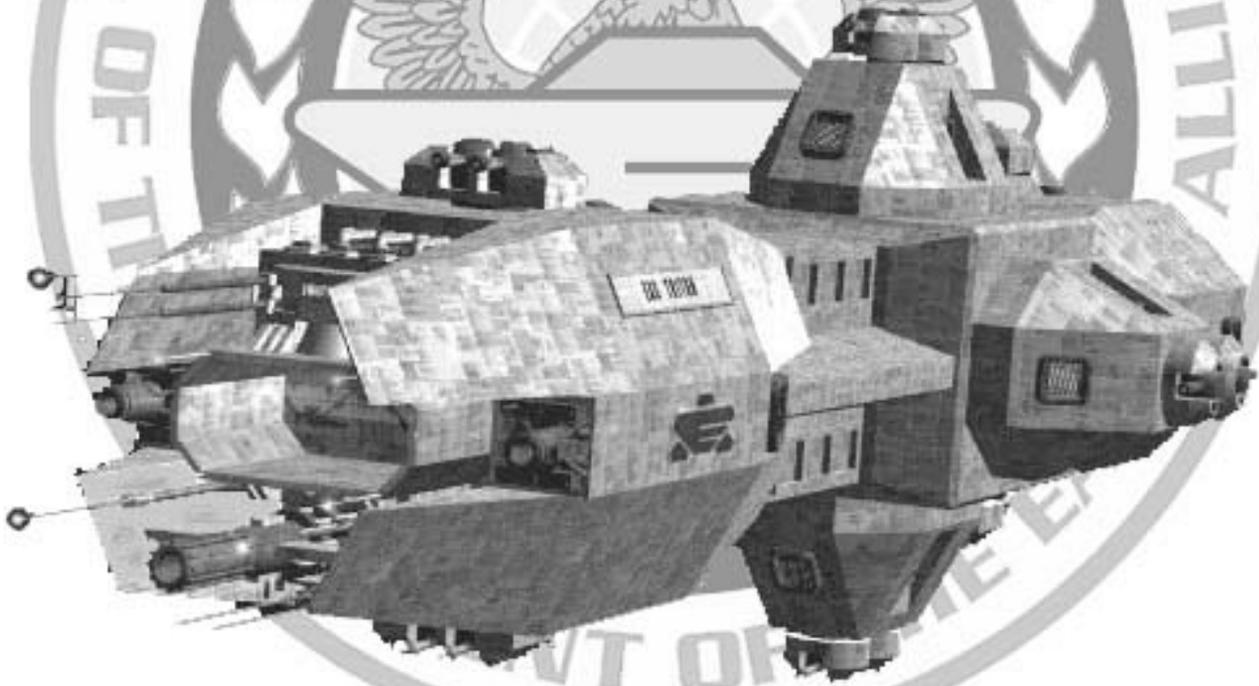
Special Rules: the shield generator on this ship is unreliable. Roll a D6 at the beginning of each turn. On a 1 it loses 1-2 points of shield rating for that turn only. However, the shield generator rating will never drop below 3.

(FA SCS in the Attachments Folder)



Arctic

ADVANCED CRUISER PROGRAM



By Richard Bax

THE origins of the Arctic Class Heavy Cruiser begin with the upgrade of Earth's primary defense grid in 2252. The update involved the addition of the two versions of the new Heavy Orbital Satellite. One of the versions included the newly developed heavy particle cannon. This huge weapon was rumored to possess enough destructive energy to decimate the East coast of the continental United States, though like most rumors on military hardware, this fact was probably wildly overstated.

Never the less, the power of this weapon immediately caught the attention of a number of senior officers within Earthforce, chief among them was Admiral Jason Ashvin Singh, the Chief of Fleet Operations. He quickly came to the conclusion that this weapon should be put into immediate fleet use and by virtue of his position pushed through a Request for Design to the Fleet Design Bureau. In the request, Singh called for a high endurance, jump capable vessel whose main weapon would be the new Heavy Particle Cannon. In addition, it would carry typical Earthforce support armaments, two full squadrons of fighters and be more maneuverable than existing Earthforce capital ships.

The difficulties of what Singh was asking was not lost on the design teams. High endurance

meant gravity, for which the Earth Alliance currently only had one answer: the rotating section. While the new Omega Class Destroyer relied on a rotating section, there were already questions being raised about its ability to withstand damage and remain functional. Unfortunately, there were no other real options, and a rotating section was included in the design. However, there would be one major change from the Omega class rotation system. Instead of the rotating section operating in open space, the new design would place the rotating section inside a non-rotating armored casement. The advantage was that the rotating section could be made much lighter since it would not require armor or the heavier structure needed to support the armor. A lighter rotating section had the added benefit of reducing the size of the rotation equipment. The only real problem was that the armored casement surrounding the rotating section limited the total living space and required a greater amount of spin to generate appropriate gravity. Even using a fully circular rotating section, the Arctic was going to have far less room than the Omega.

While habitation engineers struggled with the rotating section, the armaments team was discovering that a shipboard Heavy Particle Cannon was going to be a difficult proposition. On the heavy defense satellites, stabilization of

the heavy cannon was simply a matter of stabilizing the whole satellite, which rarely ever saw the large gee loads typical of a starship in combat. In addition, waste heat and energy emissions during weapon fire could be dumped directly into local space without concern on the unmanned satellites. The Arctic would need careful shielding and ducting to protect its crew. Finally, and potentially, most difficult, the Heavy Particle Cannon on the Arctic would have to be made far more reliable and robust. A defense satellite's weapons received constant maintenance from the planet they protected. The Arctic's particle beam would be carried into deep space where maintenance was limited and as a result the weapon would have to be capable of high fire repetition. In its final form, the Arctic's Heavy Particle Cannon would be larger than the satellite version and while not a true spinal mount, it would prove to be too large to mount on any kind of traversing system. As a result, the high maneuverability called for by Singh in the original proposal would be of even greater importance.

To get all of this into a single, relatively agile hull meant that something would have to go. The obvious choice was the embarked fighters. By removing one of the two planned squadrons, designers freed up the space needed for the par-



ticle cannon, the support weapons and the enlarged thruster arrangement. The removal of the squadron reduced the ships crew complement, which in turn reduced the size of the rotating section, thereby freeing up even more space.

When the final design was issued, Admiral Singh wasted little time in approaching the Joint Chiefs for authorization to build. He had expected a swift approval and instead ran headlong into a bureaucratic logjam. Omega destroyer production dominated all ship construction facilities and long lead construction supply contracts. Introducing a new design would prove to be difficult and the Joint Chiefs' response was to shelve the entire project till a later date. Still, Admiral Singh was Chief of Fleet Operations and was not without certain influences. Instead of shelving the entire study he managed to get support for a single prototype unit.

In 2258, the Arctic was completed for ships trials. By then the prospects of a line of these vessels was nearly gone. Rumors were circulating through Earthforce hierarchy that a new, powerful technology would soon be made available. Vast sums of research money had been diverted from standard R&D to a series of black projects that few in Earthforce were even aware of. Finally, further new fleet unit designs were unofficially discouraged until an, as yet, unnamed date in the future. Admiral Singh remained undaunted and throughout the Arctic's workup touted the successes of "Earth's Newest Defender." None of which made any difference.

With the unexpected death of President Santiago things began to change within Earthforce. President Clark's new administration moved quickly to sweep away the old Earthforce core officers, replacing them with people more in line with Clark's policies. Even the Joint Chief's felt the pressure and Admiral Singh's position of Chief of Fleet Operations, while not dissolved, was now supplanted by elements of the new Night Watch Organization, which overviewed all operational decisions and who were answerable only to Clark himself. Singh was fighting for his career now and could spare little time to champion a ship nobody wanted. Instead he downplayed the Arctic and quietly began to pull a few strings.

Everything came to a head in 2262. Babylon 5 broke away from the Earth Alliance and open fighting broke out amongst Earthforce ships. In Earthdome, Earthforce officers not directly supported by Clark were being rounded up and labeled traitors. Admiral Singh quickly realized that he would probably be on Clark's short list of officers to be rounded up.

One of the benefits of sponsoring a single ship and being Chief of Fleet Operations is that you can control virtually every action and activity that ship takes. Not only was the Arctic in Earth orbit, she was also fully outfitted and completely crewed by a hand picked group of Singh's staunchest supporters. When General Hague made his call for Earthforce officers to join him and stop Clark, the resulting confusion gave Singh his chance. Before anyone had realized what had happened, Singh and the Arctic had jumped out of Earth orbit.

Now safely in hyperspace, Singh's initiated the second part of his plan with the interception of the EAS Bulwark, a Cotton Class Long Range Tender, just 5 days out from Earth. She was fully loaded for a re-supply mission to the fleet units around Sirius. A few well-chosen words to the Bulwark's commander about the situation back home and the looming bulk of the Arctic, freed Singh and the Arctic of all supply problems for the foreseeable future.

After politely but firmly declining Sheridan's offers to join his forces, the Arctic spent the rest of the Earth Civil War avoiding an Earthforce task force Clark has assigned to tracking her down. While mostly successful, the Arctic's cruise was hardly quiet. She fought several small battles with other Earthforce vessels, had a brief but violent disagreement with a Centauri task force who felt the Arctic had deliberately entered their space and managed to stumble on to a pirate enclave who shot first and never managed to ask questions later. She took damage and lost fighters but the Bulwark was able to make good on all her losses though by the end of the Civil War, the Heavy Particle Cannon was considered almost too dangerous to fire, being held together with spit, duct tape and a number of well directed profanities.

When the Civil War ended Singh returned home. His position as Chief of Fleet Operations was reassigned and he spent the next year helping to rebuild the fractured Earthforce command structure, after which he retired.

The Arctic continues to be a one of a kind, though her distinction of being the only Earthforce vessel to mount the Heavy Particle Cannon ended with the completion of the new Warlock destroyer. However, the legacy of the Arctic may live on thanks, in part, to the new technology being made available to Interstellar Alliance members. The Arctic design plans have been pulled from storage and a new version, which incorporates artificial gravity, may be in the making.

Credits

The entire Arctic ship idea and background is a direct result of the efforts of Lars Joreteg. Most of you won't recognize the name but you will recognize his main contribution to Babylon 5, the website "Hyperspace - A Guide to B5-Crusade Ships" at <http://hyperspace.isnnews.net/>. He created the basic premise of the Arctic Cruiser in a ship graphic.

Inspired by it, I asked for and received permission to take his idea and run with it in terms of developing a Babylon 5 Wars version of the ship. Lar's original design of the Arctic included artificial gravity. However, I wanted to create something that would be available during the time frame of the original Babylon 5 series versus the later period as depicted by "A Call to Arms" and "Crusade." So I came up with the internal rotating section and took advantage of the Heavy Particle Beam described in "The Atlas of Earth Alliance Wars." The character of Admiral Jason Ashvin Singh, the Chief of Fleet Operations, came from the "Babylon Project - Earthforce Sourcebook", by Joseph Cochran and John Tuffley, which was published by Chameleon Eclectic Entertainment Inc.



Triton

ADVANCED CRUISER PROGRAM

The Arctic Program underwent a radical redesign after the Earth Alliance joined the Interstellar Alliance.

Gravity technology was but one technical breakthrough that opened up all sorts of new possibilities.

As another contender in the "Hyperion replacement contest", the newly renamed Triton Program suffered from a severe case of engineers trying to squeeze too many systems in too small a hull.

At slightly over 2/3 the length of the old Hyperion, it tried to pack in more fighters and decent firepower, at the expense of speed.

While the design looked barely all right on the drawing board, the prototype showed that the specs were a bit too optimistic - it was plagued with many problems caused by an overstressed power grid which often had major fluctuations and too small engines that were actually meant for smaller ships.

In addition, the design packed many systems too close together, resulting in a nightmare for damage control as a good hit was much more likely to take out key circuits. Not to mention how much of the space for consumables and crew had been sacrificed to make room for the fighter hangars.

The review commission didn't take long to decide that the Triton was unsuitable as a cruiser, and barely fit the bill for a system monitor - unfortunately for the designers that wasn't what Earthforce wanted...

(SCS is in the Attachments folder)



EA Arctic Class Cruiser

Length: 740 meters

Beam: 206 meters

Height: 206 meters

Crew: 354

Fighters: 24 Thunderbolts

Other craft: 2 atm. shuttles 4 shuttles, 2 boarding crafts

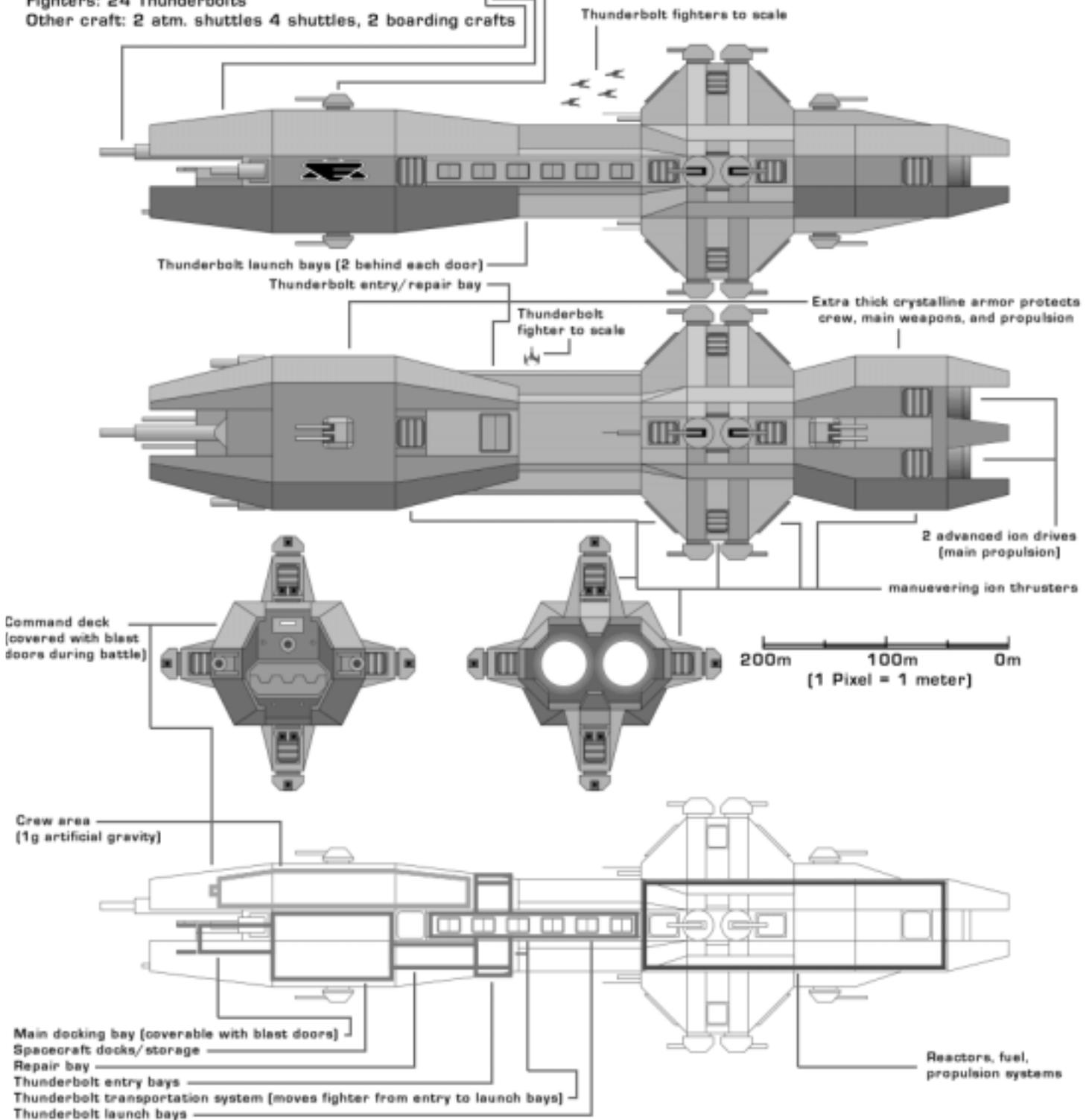
Weapons:

1 heavy beam weapon (forward mount)

2 heavy cannons (forward mount)

4 medium dual cannon turrets (2 forward, 2 rear)

8 interceptors/anti-fighter turrets (2 top, 2 bottom, 2 left, 2 right)





Sitting on the fence can be a dangerous passtime



Frontline scenarios

By RICH BAX

THE FOLLOWING scenario is the first in a series that are intended to follow each other in chronological sequence. The other scenarios will be published in following months. While it is possible to play them individually you'll get the most enjoyment by running each one in turn.

The campaign focuses on the actions of a single ship, the Earth Force Heavy Cruiser Arctic. Thanks to the Cotton Class Long Range Tender Bulwark, between some scenarios of the campaign, all damage will be repaired, as is all damage to fighters and all critical hits. Even an entire structure block can be replaced but all other systems with the exception of the thruster system will be missing.

The Arctic begins the campaign with a full load of 12 Thunderbolt fighters though no fighter missiles are available. Following some of the scenarios, any lost fighter may be replaced with Aurora fighters from the Bulwark's stores. In the likely situation where there are uneven flights of Auroras and Thunderbolts, produce addition flights as necessary. For example, the Arctic is carrying 8 Thunderbolts and 4 Auroras for the next scenario. When launched the fighter compliment will consist of 1 flight of 6 Thunderbolts, 1 Flight of 2 Thunderbolts and 1 flight of 4 Auroras.

Breakaway

Having come to a meeting of the

minds with the command of the Bulwark, Admiral Singh ordered the Bulwark to bypass Sirius and continue on for the Mentab/EA border. Rather than escort the Bulwark, Singh rightly assumed that in the current reign of confusion at Earthdome, an overdue Cotton Class Tender would not raise any immediate concerns. The Arctic, on the other hand, would be a priority

target and rather than jeopardize both ships, Singh and the Arctic, would attempt to make Mentab space via another route. Fortunately, as former Chief of Naval operation, Singh had in his possession a list of locations and deployments for most of the EA's assets that was only 4 days old. For several weeks Singh

managed to skirt patrols and dodge detection. His luck ran out as he tried to slip through the Epsilon system.

Set-Up

Singh: Heavy Cruiser Arctic with 12 Thunderbolts in the hangar in hex 0315 heading direction 1, speed 6.

EA System Patrol:
Olympus

The Arctic begins the scenario with no fighters deployed and is in the midst of cycling its jump drive and must wait 10 turns before being able to jump out.

Fighters may not ram, fighters left behind should the Arctic jump out are considered destroyed for follow-on scenarios.

Victory Conditions

The Arctic wins if it manages to escape into hyperspace with some of its fighters and without losing any of its structure blocks. The scenario is a draw if the Arctic escapes but loses a structure block and/or all of its fighters (Singh was loath to lose all of his limited Thunderbolts after only one encounter). The Arctic loses if it is destroyed or disabled via Engine/C&C/ Jump Drive Destruction.

Historical Outcome

Despite direct orders from Singh to break off, the opposing force continued to close for combat. As a result Singh launched fighters and targeted the Olympus with a long-range strike. The Olympus managed to clear the arcs of the heavy particle cannon but caught both heavy lasers to the forward section. With the forward retro's lost the Olympus was unable to avoid the heavy particle cannon which easily finished it off. The Thunderbolts made a single pass on both Tethys losing three of their numbers in the process of crippling one of the cutters. Both Tethys' then broke off the engagement and began recovering the Olympus' escape pods.

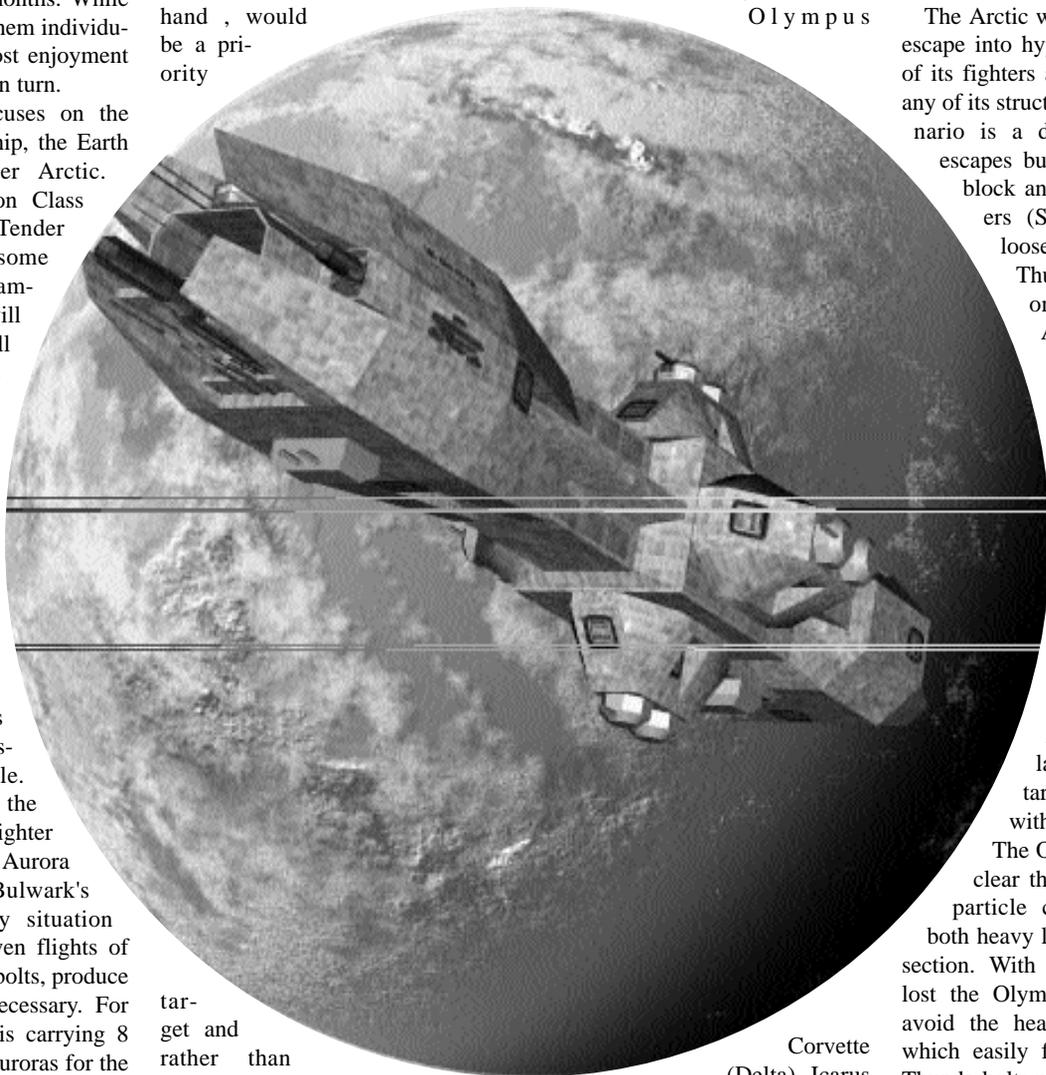
* * *

(SCS in the Attachments folder)

Corvette (Delta) Icarus in hex 3626, Tethys Police Cutters (Kappa) ESP-1140 and ESP 1151 in hexes 3825 and 3628 respectively. All units are at speed 9, heading direction 6.

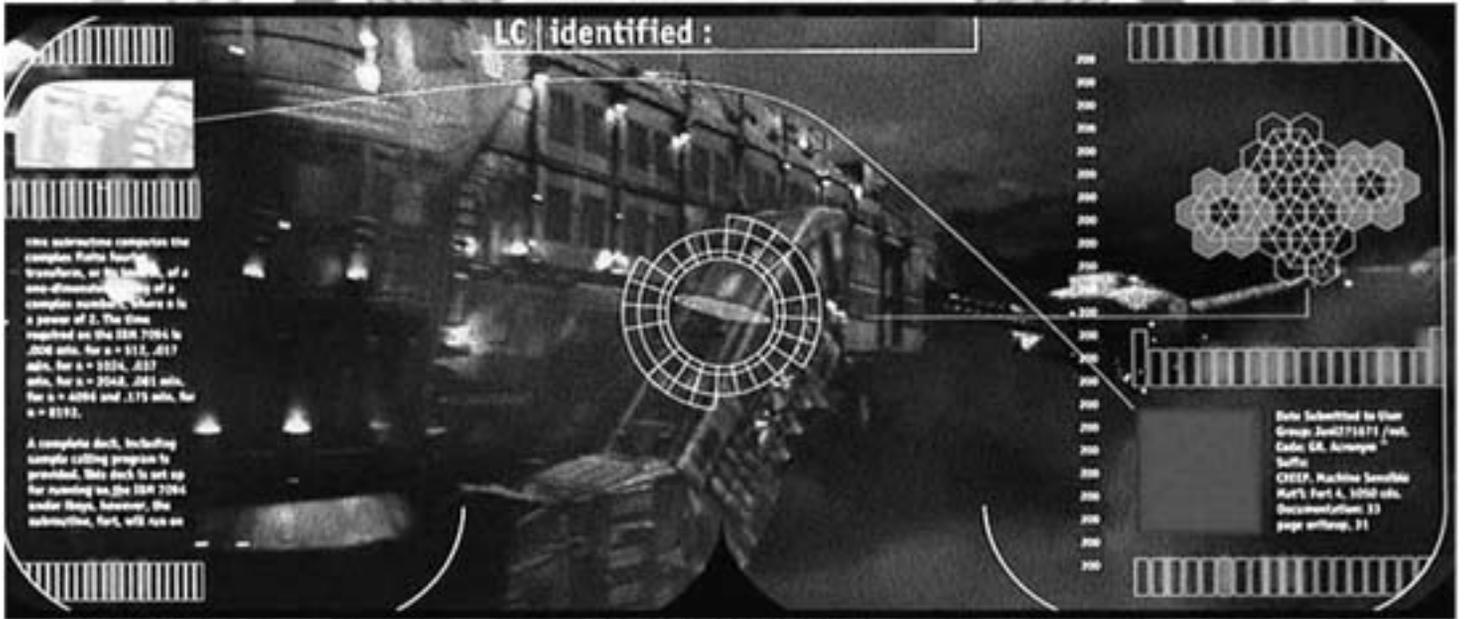
Special Rules

Use a floating map.





ONE STEP



TOO FAR

**SUBMISSION 1:
Medusa Battleship
By BEN RUBERY**

THE Medusa Battleship project was an epic tale of political wrangling, delay, and double dealing that ended in tragedy. The Medusa was first suggested by the military towards the end of the Dilgar war.

The Joint Chiefs had poured over reports of the Dilgar Mishakur, the Hyach Urutha Kal and Yolu Yuan, the larger DN/BB class ships in service in the war and how they compared to the Nova Alpha. They decided that a true battleship should be capable of leading a fleet in hard pitched battles, like the battle of Balos and the fall of Omelos, and had the dedicated facilities to command and co-ordinate a fleet.

Preliminary designs were drawn up for the Medusa Alpha in the fall of 2232, and were sent to the EA senate to approve funding for the construction of four Medusas, one each for the 1st,



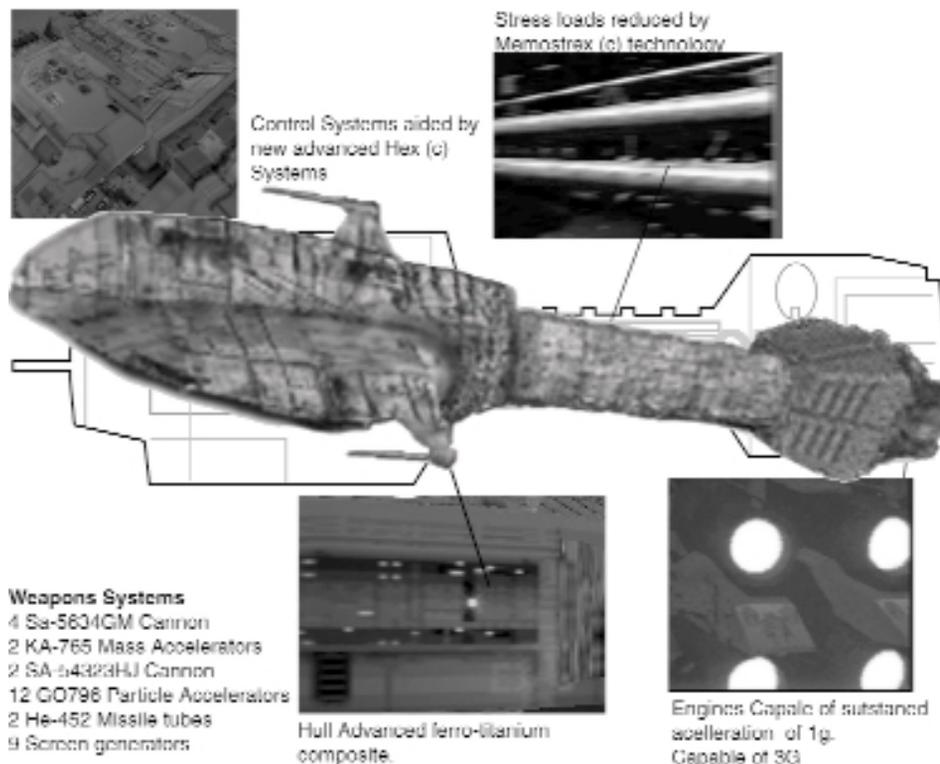
4th and 6th fleets, and a reserve unit. The senate, who had bridled at the wartime expenditure to fight the Dilgar, and who felt the EA now enjoyed an unchallenged primacy in the galaxy, refused to pay for another expensive class of fleet units, defending their decision on the grounds that they had already approved funds for pulse weapon development and the Saggiarius missile cruiser, which in their minds was more than enough new equipment for the military. They felt that tax breaks and subsidies

Surrounded by controversy since its inception, the story of the Medusa battleship program is the classic example of the gap between military wants... and economic and technical reality.

Here are just two of the design concepts considered by Earthforce during that program's dismal history. (SCS's for both submissions are in Attachments)

for industries in their home territories were a far higher priority.

The Joint Chiefs accepted the set back, but ordered a far more detailed set of plans and presentation to be created, hoping to try again after the elections of 2234. Again the bid was unsuccessful, and a number of the ships designers were moved to other projects. As the proposal went to the senate for the third time the EA R&D scientists made their breakthrough on pulse weapons and the joint chiefs were given the



Weapons Systems
 4 SA-5604GM Cannon
 2 KA-765 Mass Accelerators
 2 SA-54323HJ Cannon
 12 CO798 Particle Accelerators
 2 He-452 Missile tubes
 9 Screen generators



Hull Advanced ferro-titanium composite.



Engines Capable of sustained acceleration of 1g. Capable of 3G

Picture: JJ O'SHAUGHNESSY

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.

choice of applying the pulse upgrade to the fleet or funding for the Medusa project. The joint chiefs chose pulse weaponry, which greatly increased the firepower of many EA ships, and the expensive Nova Beta and Hyperion Delta upgrades were made. When the next round of funding applications was made in 2244, EA R&D again had the project turned down, but were given funding for the Aurora starfury.

Then came the Earth/Minbari war.

The Medusa design was given immediate approval after the fall of Vega to the Windsword forces. Construction begun, but due to a series of accidents, design problems, and out and out war profiteering by some, the design (now the Medusa Beta having been updated to include pulse technology) was only ready as the war entered its final chapter and the Minbari invaded Sol. The Medusa had been completed only a few days and was still undergoing checks when the Minbari entered the system near the Io gate, having pinpointed Jupiters mass shadow in hyperspace using

their advanced sensor technology. The Medusa joined a rag tag fleet defending the Io yards, and managed to inflict some damage on a Minbari Sharlin before being destroyed.

After the war the Medusa project was abandoned in favour of the Omega project and the immediate construction of enough Hyperion Thetas, Etas and Epsilons to stave off possible attacks from the Ch'Lonas or Narn. The Medusa became a footnote in EA design history, though many of the features of the engine section were duplicated in the construction of the Explorer.

(B5W SCS in Attachments)

SUBMISSION 2 Medusa Battleship

By PAUL BROWN

pbcbrown@shaw.ca

Historical Fluff: Impressed by the Dilgar Mishakur Dreadnought and its cold hearted efficiency, the Earth Alliance sought a vessel of its own to fill the Battleship role. The project was originally commissioned in 2235, the design spending several years on the drawing board. The foundation of the prototype was laid down in 2238 and the original ship launched in 2242 after becoming bogged down in political and economic problems. The original ship proved extremely sluggish, unacceptably so, the prototype was put back into dock for a major redesign. Through the next five years it's re-launch was again pushed back as it received a secondary aft engine, and several weapon refits. By the time of its second trials in 2247 the ship was still sluggish and new problems surfaced in a faulty reactor system and power grid. As it was putting back to dock it was destroyed by Minbari forces. The unsuccessfulness of the design and the Alliance focus on Omega Destroyers after the war left the design off the agenda.

Major Power Fluctuations: (New Rules)

As Power Fluctuations except critical modifier is +2 and all temporary power losses are increased by 50 percent. For example, a roll of 17 on an undamaged reactor would result in a final result of 19 and a total power loss of 12 points. FA versions of the Unreliable ship rules can be found at :

www.robertshome.org/gaming/b5/fa/centauri/

(FA SCS in Attachments)



Bad tools always blame their workmen

ADMIRAL Hayes looked at the tactical holo. The Medusas command bridge was the cutting edge of EA technology, meant to serve in conflicts like the Dilgar war, when it would have led EA forces to victory over the enemy.

But they were waiting for the Minbari to arrive. The Minbari had found the mass shadow of Jupiter in hyperspace, and had made several recon sorties to establish where the EA fleet was. Their own fleet could not be far away. The fleet defending Io was a forlorn hope by any standards, but Earthforce had pulled every unit it could back to form a line between Earth and the Moon. His defence force at Io was meant to slow the Minbari and give them a bloody nose, to try and make them reconsider their advance towards Earth by inflicting as much damage as possible on them. He only hoped the tools he had been given were adequate.

Which explained the Hyperion ramships that were currently deployed on the fleets left flank, hoping to move in as a pincer and ram some of the enemy cruisers. A small group of tankers loaded with explosives was meant to support them, using any hole opened in the Minbari formation to move in and ram more ships. And with them were a group of shuttles fitted with ramming prows, meant to ram more enemy ships. Hayes found it ironic that two and a half thousand years of evolution in naval warfare had taken them into space going warships and they were going to use the same tactics used by Themistocles that had defeated Xerxes at Salamis. Minefields had been set up to try to channel the Minbari advance and allow the EA to engage them at close range with the advantage in numbers they would need to make successful ramming attacks.

Admiral Hayes didn't think the plan would work. It was over complex and relied on stupidity on the



Fiction: By BEN RUBERY

part of the Minbari. While the Hyperions might gain the element of surprise and pull off a few successful strikes, the Minbari formation would need to be seriously disrupted for the tankers to have even a hope of getting close to their targets. But once the Minbari knew about the EA ramships they would make them priority targets and destroy them. Admiral Hayes was relying on that. Because formed up behind the tankers was every aging fighter Hayes had managed to scrape together. They would go in through the hole the ramships opened, supported by two squadrons of Tethys and a couple of old Laertes that Hayes had pulled from mothballs, and do as much damage to the Minbari fleet as possible. Hayes hoped the emissions from the tankers would mask the fighters on their way in. The Aurora Furies Hayes had under his command were deployed as pickets for his fleet, but the Novas, Tigers and Delta-Vs he'd acquired were massed behind the tankers ready to try to flank the Minbari.

Hayes had reviewed every record of Minbari tactics he could, and was hoping they would pursue a false retreat by picket forces and allow the ramships and fighters to do their jobs. If not the plan would come unstuck a lot sooner than he'd hoped.

All that was left was waiting for the Minbari.

Within an hour they were there. A cloud of Minbari cruisers started to move towards the Io base. If they followed standard Minbari tactics they'd sit outside the range of the

OSATs and bombard them to scrap.

Hayes selected a squadron of ships on the tactical holo, and had it move forward to try to lure the Minbari in. Several Minbari cruisers moved forwards, and four of the ships in the squadron winked out.

But it was enough. Hayes gave the attack order and the fleet moved forwards. The Minbari formed up in a tighter formation to protect them from EA fighters. Minbari fighters moved to screen their cruisers. The Aurora furies moved to dogfight the Nials, and the ramships accelerated towards the Minbari cruisers.

The Minbari were not so easily fooled. Beams reached out from the Minbari and touched many of the ramships, leaving them spinning into the darkness. The survivors continued to close, and more of them were torn apart by close range fire. One of the ramships managed to strike a Minbari cruiser dead on, and another had a glancing collision before being torn apart by Nials.

The hole was small but there, and the tankers and shuttles moved in for their own kamikaze runs. The Minbari were not going to fall for the same trick twice, and the tankers became silent flashes as the Minbari picked them off. Nials started to decimate the shuttles.

Hayes sent the activation order and the waves of aging fighters moved to attack the Minbari, catching the Nials by surprise. The Minbari fighters fell back to the defensive perimeter of their ships, where they could be supported by anti-fighter fire.

But the plan was working, and the EA fleets centre were almost within firing range.

"Sir, picking up a transmission from the Minbari fleet." "Comm, what is it? Call for reinforcements, retreat order?" Hayes hoped that the comm station, apparently one of the most advanced deployed on a human ship, could decrypt the Minbari transmission.

But it quickly became apparent what the order was. Jump points opened and a swarm of Minbari fighters and frigates moved to cut off the EA fighter groups. The Minbari had waited for the EA to make their move, and then moved to surround them once they were committed.

A Nova off the port of the Medusa exploded. The EA fleet was forming up for a last stand, but Hayes still had a few tricks left.

"Activate the mines. Pick the nearest targets and fire." The DEW mines that had lain dormant on the edges of the field fired on the Minbari. Most of the plasma mines missed, but some of the heavy laser mines purchased from the Narn scored some serious damage on the Minbari cruisers. Hayes designated the most seriously damaged as targets and relayed those orders to the remains of the fleet.

There was no chance of victory, or survival, but they might hurt the Minbari and delay their advance on Earth. As the Medusa closed with a Minbari cruiser, firing missiles towards its target, Hayes could feel the deck shaking from weapon impacts.

"Fire forward batteries, order screening fighters to break off and launch attack runs." Hayes watched pulses impact the cruiser ahead of them, and the ship started to tremble with the returning fire, a trembling that grew worse, coupled with a rumble of distant thunder.



B5W Scenario
By BEN RUBERY



The fall of Io

THE EA had been expecting a major attack near the jumpgate at Io, as the Chiefs of Staff knew the Minbari would home in on the mass shadow of either Jupiter or Sol in hyperspace soon enough.

While the plan to evacuate Earth continued and the attempts to put together a last ditch defence of Earth continued at breakneck speed, Admiral Hayes aboard the newly launched Medusa Battleship was ordered to fight a holding action at Io, using a few squadrons of warships and some specially modified kamikaze hulls.

The objective of the EA forces was to damage and delay the Minbari as much as possible.

Set up:

Use 2 full size maps to give a playing area twice the normal size. This represents a gap in the EA mine fields around their Io base.

The Minbari jump in along the top hex row on the first turn, and the EA set up along the bottom hex row.

The Minbari have a starting speed of 5, the EA can select a starting speed between 0 and 10.

Forces

EA

1 Medusa BB,
1 Nova Beta DN,
1 Hyperion Epsilon,
1 Hyperion Delta,
1 Hyperion Zeta,
2 Hyperion Theta,
4 Hyperion Kamikaze (see notes),
1 Oracle Gamma,
2 Olympus Delta,
1 Olympus Gunship,
1 Saggitarius,
4 Tethys Police Cutter,

1 Tethys Laser Boat,
1 Tethys Leader,
2 Laertes,
6 Kamikaze Tankers (see notes).

Fighters

78 Aurora Starfuries,
24 Nova Class Starfuries,
36 Tiger Class Starfuries,
48 Delta-V fighters,
24 Kamikaze shuttles (see notes)

Minbari

6 Sharlin War Cruisers each with 24 Nial
Reinforcements
(called in if a War Cruiser is destroyed, jumping in the turn after)
4 Tinashi War Frigates, 48 Tishat fighters

Special Rules

Kamakasi: The EA commander has prepared a trap for the Minbari, and while he knows victory is very unlikely, he hopes to damage their forces severely. If the Medusa is destroyed, all EA forces may ram.

The following changes are made to the Kamikaze units:

Kamikaze shuttles - Increase ramming factor to 24. May Ram.

Kamikaze tankers - Increase ramming factor to 120.

Kamikaze Hyperions - These are Hyperion Thetas modified into ramships. Their prows have been modified and specially armoured to make them more likely to survive to strike their targets. All armour values on the forward structure except for the interceptors are increased by 2. The only useable systems on the forward structure are the interceptors, all others have been replaced by dummy systems and layers of

armour. The rear heavy lasers have been stripped out (mark as destroyed). Increase engine to 12 free thrust, increase rear thrusters to 4 output each. Their is 1 point of extra power. Increase ramming factor to 370.

The Minbari player can only tell if a Hyperion is a Kamikaze if its actions reveal it to be one, or if it is hit with enough weapons fire to blow the forward structure off but survives due to the extra armour.

Mines: The EA player may deploy the following mines within 5 hexes of the two sides of the map - 6 D'shal DEW mine (command controlled) and 12 Class D3 DEW mines (command controlled).

Victory Conditions

The Minbari win a total victory if they destroy all EA ships without having to call in reinforcements.

The Minbari win a minor victory if they destroy all EA ships but lose 1 cruiser.

The Minbari achieve a draw if they destroy all EA ships but lose 2 cruisers.

The EA achieve a total victory if they destroy 3 Minbari cruisers.

The EA achieve a minor victory if they destroy 2 Minbari cruiser

The EA achieve a draw if they destroy 1 Minbari cruiser.

Designers Notes - this is a big fleet battle, but probably the best way to represent the fall of Io. Players wanting a smaller battle should have the forces. While this is simple for the Minbari, the EA player may wish to select a 12.5k force but must include a Medusa and at least 2 Hyperion Kamikaze (treat as 650 points each).



Hyperion - father of the gods

Hecate Delta

By STEVE CROSS

Once the Dilgar War ended, the EA poured research into the Dilgar's Pulsar technology. The bolters proved easy to copy but millions were spent trying to emulate the Pulsar. After two years of near continuous R&D, Earthdome demanded that they see results and a deadline of 6 months was set, otherwise funding for the pulsar tech ship would be cancelled. The engineers and scientist worked 24 hours a day until the Hecate Pyrotinia was launched. Although an unusual name for the EA, the ship was commissioned to honour the famous Alacan ship, the only survivor of their fleet.

After initial testing, the pulsar armament was deemed successful and the ship entered service in EarthForce fleets. The ship performed well on exercises but was always classed as an experiment, and eventually after many millions more were spent on the weapons, the Pulse cannon was designed. The plans were promptly either stolen or copied by many of the races who shared a border with the EA.

Take a normal Hyperion Theta and do the following changes:

Weapons:

Remove all Hvy lasers and replace them with Quad Pulsars.
Remove front Plasma and replace them with Energy Pulsars
Remove aft Pulse cannon and replace with Scatter pulsar
Remove side Pulse cannons and replace with scatter pulsars

Structure

Remove the hanger and let the ship have 2 shuttles, as for points I would value this ship at 700 points or so??

Designers Note: Not much of a prototype but it does fill the missing link between the Hecate Beta and the sudden appearance of Pulse tech on EA ships.

Hyperion Prototype

By BEN RUBERY

THE EA senate approved the budget for a new cruiser type in 2205, along with a number of other projects (unfortunately some of these were complete failures, like a Tiger Starfury based bomber design and a refurbishment of the earlier Fury models to fit recon or assault roles).

The Hyperion prototype took 3 years to make it from the 3D design holos to leaving the slips at Io.

Sounded as a replacement for the Epimetheus cruiser, the Hyperion was designed to incorporate the interceptor Mk-I and a flight of fighters, as well as the most modern technology the EA had to offer.

This approach led to problems though. The prototype was equipped with too many different weapons systems, all of which needed different spare parts. While it was assumed that the supply chain would find it simple to keep the Hyperions stocked with missiles and railgun rounds, this was not the case. On patrols it was not unusual for ships to be reduced to 20% of their original stocks of ammunition, and the rails in the rail guns needed replacing after a certain number of shots, preventing ships equipped with them from straying too far from the supply lines if they wanted their main armament to continue to function. The spares problem made the ship particularly vulnerable to critical malfunctions due to combat damage.

The prototype, while a bold step towards a new workhorse cruiser for the EA, had a number of design flaws. The nose laser was far too small and short ranged to be of any great use, and while it could not be intercepted (and one of the problems the EA had in skirmishes with the

Centauri was their ability to shoot down EA munitions) it lacked the punch for this to be significant. The missile rack's limited range and firing arcs were more of a limit than advantage. The long arming cycle of the railguns and medium plasmas left the ship without significant offensive ability for significant periods when compared to the weapons in use by the Centauri and Ch'Lonas (the fast firing assault laser enjoying favour with both). Also the poorly armoured aft section, and the fact that none of the larger guns covered the aft quarter, gave the design an Achilles heel against fast moving and manoeuvrable enemy ships and gunboats.

In the alpha model, the nose laser emplacement was replaced with a plasma cannon in a turret, as were the waist missile launchers, taking the three secondary weapons systems and making them the tried and tested medium plasma, which now had 360 degree coverage. The railguns were removed and replaced with particle cannons, a faster firing and more accurate weapon that did not require the large amount of logistical support the railgun did. The sensor suite was upgraded to meet the new standard seen on the Nova Dreadnought, and the reactor increased to provide the power for these new systems.

While the Hyperion prototype model has its flaws it was a bold step for the EA, and gave them a cruiser design that laboured on for another forty years as the workhorse of the EA, until the Omega destroyer. However its legacy will live on in EA naming nomenclature, as the Omega was christened a destroyer to avoid invoking memories of the expense of the Hyperion series, which led one military wag proposing the Warlock be classified "an armoured space dinghy" to remove the funding problems associated with Dreadnought sized warships.

Learning the lessons of war

TORATA GERION FLEET CARRIER By WOLFGANG LACKNER

IN THE battles the Torata fought against the Kor-Lyan and several other races a lack in their ability to field fighters was noticed. Even with escorts and good firing arcs on their ships, dedicated fighter forces wreaked havoc with smaller units. Although the Goltar are few in numbers, the Regent ordered a carrier designed. The result was the Gerion Fleet Carrier. The ship was not maneuverable and fast like the Goltar Fast Cruisers, but at least it was able keep up with the slower Torata ships. The Gerion was equipped with only a Plasma Accelerator to defend against ships, but it sports four of the new Pentagon Arrays to give it good anti-fighter firepower. There are some problems with the firing arcs to the rear, because the three main thrusters block a large

portion of the Pentagon arrays' firing arcs. With a carrying capacity of 24 fighters, the new carrier was able to double or triple the fighter load of a standard patrol fleet. Only the shortage of fighter pilots in the Goltar military and the introduction of the Alover Scout Carrier prevented the ship to become a common sight in the Torata military.

NARN RENKORR DESTROYER By PAUL BROWN

IMMEDIATELY after the Centauri withdrawal from Narn, the newly born Regime began its space program. Narn scientists began work on the first versions of the T'Loth and early fighters. While the ship was under production, the Narns needed some form of defence. The Centauri had left several ageing Falenna garrison ships in system. The Narns salvaged and

refitted them, with captured Tactical Lasers and the first models of the reverse engineered Twin Array. The newly christened Destroyers were still old ships, especially with inexperienced Narn maintenance crews. The ships were vulnerable to damage, falling apart, and scientists were unable to understand the workings behind the Tactical Lasers. The weapons quickly fell into disfavour and disfunction, as the Narns began their own research into laser weaponry. The Destroyers remained in use until the 2230s, but spent much of their lifetime in the auxillary forces as training vessels. FA versions of the Unreliable ship rules can be found at www.robertshome.org/gaming/b5/fa/centauri/

(SCSs are in the Attachments folder)



Picture: JJ O'SHAUGHNESSY

Historical:

Im-Rehsa has been constantly leading the technological edge for the Brakiri, the Tashkami is no exception. The prototype represents the first steps into the next generation of Advanced Cruisers. The ship is largely a test bed for new technologies. Mounting Improved Graviton Beams, advanced shields and sensors as well as the new Anti-Gravity Displacers. As they push the envelope to its limits, they are bound to get cut as well. The Prototype is still in the testing stage and as such is full of problems. It is believed that the ship will be ready for standard military service within five years.

Improved Graviton Beams:

Designed to be both better than Graviton Beams yet more accessi-

TASHKAMI Prototype

By PAUL BROWN

ble than the Gravitic Lance, the improved Beams incorporate a stronger beam which is both more accurate and able to be sustained for longer periods of time. At present however it suffers from misfiring problems and is not suitable for the field of battle.

Anti-Gravity Displacers:

Created on the same principles as the Gravitic Drives, Displacers are used to target objects and to essentially gravitate or push off from them. Scientists first thought of the concept after seeing the Torvalus ship in action during the

battle of Corianus 6. The devices are intended to give the ships increased tactical flexibility allowing them to perform unexpected maneuvers.

Displacers work by first targeting a vessel or other substantial object (moon, asteroid, planet). Work out the roll to hit as normal, if the weapon hits the firing ship is moved 1d5 hexes in the opposite direction, away from the target. The controller of the ship chooses which hexes it moves into, but all choices must take the ship farther from its target. Should the target

be a planetoid, assume the defence rating to be 20.

Minor Sensor Fluctuations:

As Sensor Fluctuations except critical modifier is -1. This modifier does NOT apply to any critical rolls which are the result of damage taken to the sensor icon.

Shield Generator Fluctuations:

Each turn, at the start of the turn, roll for a critical hit on the shield generator with a +1 on the die roll (plus 1 for each additional point of damage already scored to the generator). Such criticals are not permanent however (regardless of what the listed critical would indicate). No effect caused by this roll lasts for more than the duration of the current turn.

(SCS in the Attachments folder)

Before the Bin'Tak there was the G'eron

Narn G'eron Battleship By RICHARD BAX

WHEN the Narn Regime implemented the "Emergency Naval Development" project, its intention was to produce as many combat capable warships in as short a time as possible. Most Narn leaders of the time were convinced that the fickle Centauri would change their minds and return to Homeworld and it was hoped that a sizeable fleet, even one based on ships that were individually inferior to Centauri vessels, would form a large enough deterrent to keep the Centauri away.

As time passed, it was realized that the Centauri had much larger problems than the Narn and were no longer concerned with this one former subject world. The Narn thus gained much-needed breathing room to reassess their position. It also gave Narn's scientists and engineers time to unravel the secrets of captured Centauri technology and time for its naval architects to begin designing a second generation of warships that would be able to fight the Narn's neighbours on equal or near equal terms.

With the Centauri, the largest near term threat, the Narn fleet build up was based on countering the Centauri war fleet. Even in its decline the once "Lion of the Galaxy" retained a diverse and powerful force. Leading the Centauri war machine was the large and powerful Ocuturian class battleship. To engage a Centauri fleet would entail combat with this vessel. As a result, the Narns decided that they needed a vessel of their own which could match or exceed the Centauri's flagship.

Initial design studies were plagued by lack of design experience with large, heavy vessels. To speed progress the design teams dedicated to the task began to look into the idea of scaling up

another design of an existing vessel. The most promising option was another ongoing design known as the G'Quan class heavy cruiser. It was large and robustly designed which made it a solid candidate for scaling up to a battleship class vessel, but more importantly, the G'Quan design was making excellent progress. With few options, the designers began work on a scaled up design.

Unfortunately, scaling a cruiser design up to a battleship quickly proved to be far more difficult than was earlier hoped. The enlarged hull meant more armor to cover it. The added armor meant more internal bracing, driving up the weight. More weight meant larger more massive engines, which meant a larger structure to house them, which in turn drove the weight still higher. The design quickly spiralled out of control and wholesale compromises were obviously needed.

The first realization was that this new battleship design was not and could not be as large as the Ocuturian. Designers simply lacked the experience to build such a large hull and only time and practice would solve that particular problem. As a result a number of size and weight saving measures were introduced into the design. The first was to reduce the number of main thrusters from the three main thrusters in the G'Quan to two improved versions whose combined thrust would be only slightly less than the G'Quan. The reduction in total thrust had the added benefit of requiring a smaller engine. The fighter bay, originally planned to house 24 Gorith fighters, was reduced to the G'Quan's 12, though extra space was retained to support larger future fighters. Weapon systems were reduced which was matched by a reduction in reactor size.

Ultimately, progress on the design reached the point where construction on the first vessel was

ordered. But as work progressed, rumors began to filter out about a completely new and revolutionary design that would be larger still, armed with the latest weapons and be capable of not only facing but also defeating an Ocuturian.

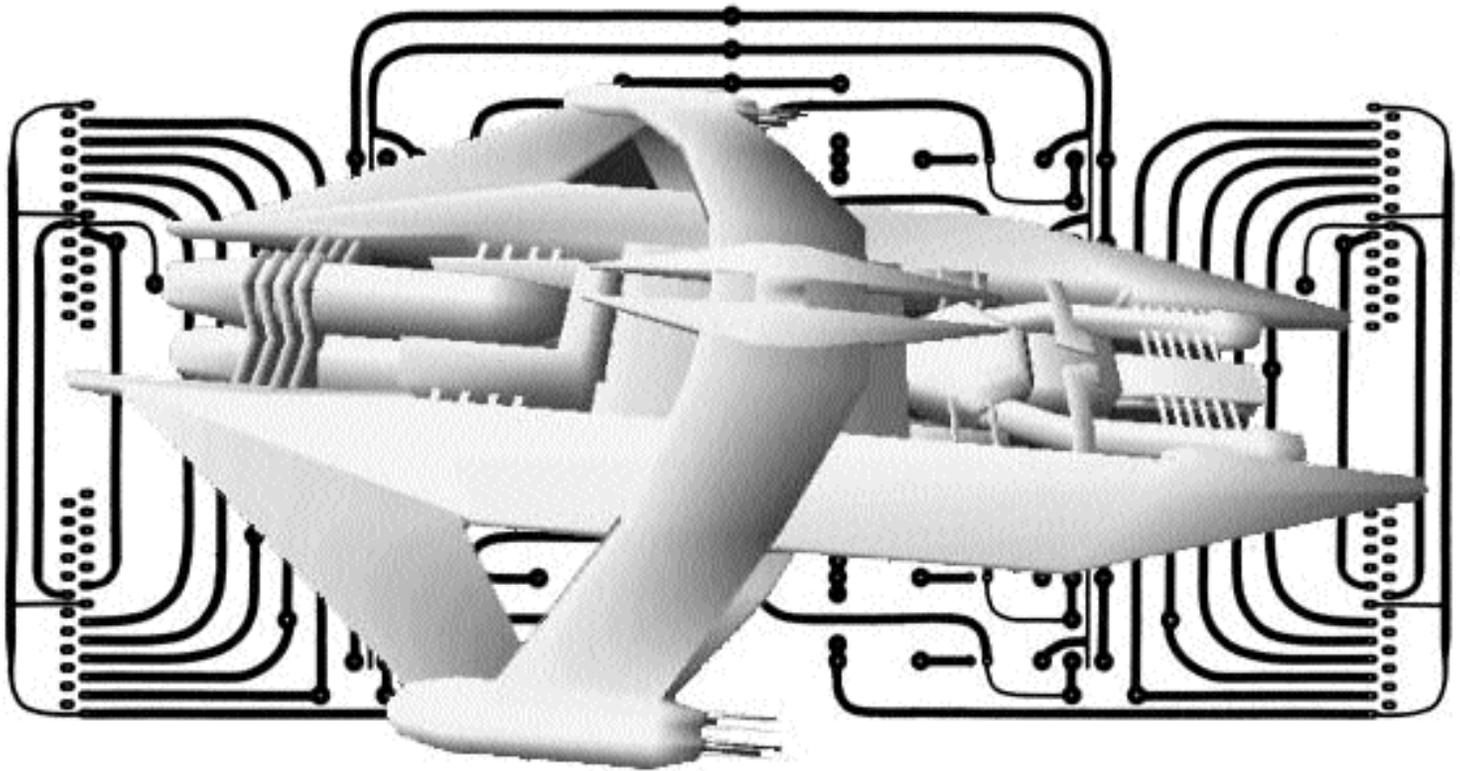
Despite the rumors work was finally completed on the first battleship, now named the G'eron. Work ups and testing proved the ship to be capable though uninspiring. Though capable of defeating a Centauri cruiser, the G'eron would likely not survive an encounter with an Ocuturian. As a result, construction of the second battleship, the T'Lair, was soon halted and within a month, work was begun on a new design, the Bin'Tak dreadnought.

For the moment at least, the G'eron was still the most capable warship in the Narn fleet. She was assigned to Gold Fleet where she served as flagship. Her activities were limited to the occasional saber rattles against other races, none of which culminated in direct combat.

When the first Bin'Tak, G'Quan's Fire, was commissioned most assumed that the G'eron's day was done, but two months later G'Quan's Fire was lost to a freak reactor failure with all hands. Stunned by the loss, the Narn Admiralty ordered the T'Lair to be completed as a stopgap while an investigation of the G'Quan's Fire loss was conducted. The T'Lair was completed just prior to the completion of the investigation. While no formal report of the investigation was ever made, subsequent to the T'Lair's completion, construction of a second Bin'Tak was ordered concurrent with the canceling of any further construction of G'eron class vessels.

The G'eron was assigned as flagship to the Gold Fleet while the T'Lair was assigned the flag of Blue Fleet. Both ships were later replaced by Bin'Tak dreadnoughts and reassigned as task force leaders for their respective fleets.

NARN BATTLESHIP PROGRAM:



Both vessels took part in the opening moments of the Narn-Centauri War. The G'eron, now part of Red Fleet and commanded by Dar'Jareth T'Narl, took part in the assaults of Quadrant 27, Beta 3, and Coutor before barely escaping the Centauri trap at Batain. The T'Lair took part in the first Quadrant 32 probes, followed by the assault on Jux Prime and the annexation of Polgrath.

Throughout these early battles, the G'eron and T'Lair had both performed well, while experiencing only minimal damage. Unfortunately, their luck was to change as the Narn assault began to grind to a halt. The T'Lair's luck ran out first when Admiral G'tal of Blue Fleet struck at the Marigol system. Sustaining heavy damage during the assault on the defending Kraken starbase, the T'Lair was subsequently lost when a Centauri fleet unexpectedly jumped in and drove the Narn fleet back to Quadrant 8.

The G'eron's moment of fame came when Admiral G'Vren was killed with his Bin'Tak flagship, D'Korith. Warleader T'Narl, the only obvious choice, was quickly promoted to replace him and with him came the G'eron, now the flagship of the Red Fleet in Ragesh. A few weeks later the Centauri almost repeated their earlier feat of taking out the Narn Warleader of Red Fleet when they crippled the G'eron during their assault that recaptured Ragesh.

The G'eron was subsequently sent rearward for repairs at Bor'goth, the highly guarded secret system within Narn space. Rated too heavily damaged for priority repair, she would spend the remainder of the war hanging in high orbit.

At war's end, repairs on the G'eron were finally begun, but it would be another six months before she was declared fit for duty. During the remainder of the occupation, the G'eron served as flagship for the Bor'goth defense task force, while

the lone surviving Bin'Tak flagged the only remaining strike group. Following the end of the occupation, the G'eron was retained as fleet flag of Bor'goth while the Bin'Tak was relocated to new Homeworld defense fleet.

Credits:

The G'eron came about due to a miniature created by Keith Dague of Stellyardyne Industries. He originally had a B5Wars SCS for this ship but it was made pre-NCW and pre-2nd Edition. The G'eron's and T'lair's history used a lot of personal fiction on my part played off against published information in Agents of Gaming's Showdowns-5. The section about the first Bin'Tak's being destroyed is based on a scenario called "Sink the Bin'Tak in Agents of Gaming's Showdowns-1 supplement book.

SCENARIO:

The Beta 3 Wrecking Crew

Buoyed by the ease at which Quadrant 1 had been taken in the first week of the War of Retribution, Dar'Sol G'Vren, supreme commander of the Narn Red Fleet, decided to split his forces in order to launch a simultaneous assault on both Ragesh and Beta 3. G'Vren would command the assault on Ragesh and Bar'Jareth T'Narl, placed in overall command of the Beta 3 assault fleet, would move into Beta 3 and secure the production centers and the mothballed Centauri 16th Loyal Fleet.

Intelligence indicated that both Beta 3 and Ragesh were weakly defended with only Ragesh having an orbital base station. As a result, G'Vren took the majority of the fleet into Ragesh leaving Bar'Jareth T'Narl and a heavy task force for the walkover of Beta 3.

Unfortunately for T'Narl, the expected walkover quickly degenerated into a nasty firefight when several members of the 16th Loyal Fleet, hastily reactivated and crewed, unexpectedly showed up.

Set-Up

Narns: G'eron, 2xG'Quan, G'Karh, Ka'Toc, Rongoth, 2xThentus, 2xSho'Kos, 2xSho'Kov in hex 0115 or any of the surrounding six hexes, facing right, speed 8.

Centauri: Demos, 2xVorchan, 2xHaven, Primus, 4xReactivated Primus in hex 4215 or any hex within 3 hexes of 4215, facing left, speed 8.

Fighters: The G'eron and both G'quan's carry Frazi's while the G'Karh and Ka'Toc carry Goriths. The Centauri have 24 Senti's and 36 Razik's launched from the Primus and Beta-3.

Special Rules

The Centauri must attempt to destroy as many Narn ships as possible. If the Demos or Primus is destroyed, the remaining Centauri units may disengage. The Narns are not permitted to disengage and must fight to the end.

If the Primus is lost, Centauri fighters may ram (the reactivated Primus are crewed by civilians who are unwilling to ram). Similarly, if the G'eron is lost, Narn fighters may ram.

Reactivated Primus's

When word reached Beta-1 of the assaults on Quadrant 1, the Centauri commander on site realized that Beta-3 would be next. With virtually no hope of reactivating any of the mothballed 16th Loyal Fleet elements to full combat

Narn Shon'Kar Escort Frigate

by Alex Kettle

In the few years since the introduction of the Dag'Kar missile frigate, several of these ships had been damaged or destroyed when an enemy light ship or group of fighters managed to slip past the fleet and get in close to it. Lacking defensive weapons even small groups of Dag'Kars could be ravaged while fleet escorts rushed back to protect it.

In response to these losses the Narn command brought into service the Shon'Kar escort variant. A simple idea it none-the-less completely changed the mission profile of the ship. This version removed all Ion torpedoes from the hull and added several defensive weapons under protective covers, so as to make this ship indistinguishable from the normal version until it started firing. In place of the entire torpedo complement the ship gained four Light Pulse cannons, two Twin Arrays and a single Pulsar Mine. However with the new mounts that needed to be installed to provide all-round weapons coverage, space needed to be made, and so the reactor was reduced since the new weapon complement required far less power. Very few of these ships ever saw action, but when they did, they usually ended up catching enemy fighters that closed by surprise and usually destroying them, or at least holding them off long enough for heavier escorts to arrive. The design proved effective in it's role but was never terribly popular and few were produced. There were however several rumors from Raider groups of having been driven away from a Narn convoy by similar ships which kept the Ion torpedoes and exchanged the Eminees for defensive weapons, creating a very potent escort frigate.

- Remove all Ion torpedoes- add 4 LPCs with the same arcs as the TAs on the Rongoth. Add a single TA to each side with a 180 degree side arc, and add 1 Pulsar mine to the back with a 180 degree aft arc.

- Reduce reactor a few boxes, leave free power at 0. This space would be lost in the removal of the heavy weapons, all the extra modifications since the ship was built to carry those weapons.

All new weapons are under cover however, similar to a Q-ship or Wolf Raider, thus until the weapons are "run out" this variant is undetectable from the normal Dag'Kar, making attacking any lone or group of Dag'Kars a bit chancy unless you've seen it firing ion torpedoes (or potentially eminees).



status, the commander chose to partially reactivate as many Primus battlecruisers as possible. His hope was that by hiding his only fleet ready Primus amongst these paper ships, he might sow enough confusion that his remaining fleet elements might strike a heavy enough blow to slow the Narn long enough for reinforcements to arrive or additional 16th Loyal Fleet Activation. The reactivated Primus's have ½ their usual free thrust, ½ their usual sensor rating, no operational jump drives and a total of 9 points of available power to power their weapons (this includes the 3 points for the deactivated jump drive). Thus each reactivated Primus may start the game with 1 battle laser armed or the Centauri player may buy additional thrust as a means of enhancing the deception. (It will be necessary for the Centauri player to keep accurate notes as to which weapons are powered during each game turn).

Lacking an ELINT vessel, the only way the Narn can determine the real Primus from the reactivated Primus is when the real Primus does something the re-activated units cannot (such as using more thrust, more EW or firing more weapons than the re-activated units).

Victory Conditions

Sum the total combat points of the Narn ships and fighters destroyed. Add to this total ¼ of the combat points for those Narn ships that were

crippled (lost a side). Subtract from this total the combat points of destroyed Centauri ships and ¼ of the combat points of crippled Centauri ships (lost a side). The reactivated Primus's are worth only 150 combat points for this calculation. If the final total is greater than 0, then the Centauri have succeeded in delaying the Narn assault long enough for reinforcement to arrive or be reactivated. The Narn Centauri War will be much shorter thanks to the Centauri commander's quick thinking and skill. Anything else is a Centauri loss.

Historical Outcome

Bar'Jareth T'Narl realized early on that something was up when the massed Primus's failed to snipe at him from long range. Putting two and two together he realized that they must be hastily re-activated units from the mothball fleet with limited capabilities. Ignoring them, he proceeded to annihilate the remaining Centauri fleet units. T'Narl found out the hard way that one of the Primus's was fully operational when it gutted one of his two G'Quans before jumping to safety with two of the other reactivated Primus's. Though bloodied, T'Narl continued into the system and took Beta-3, although it would be several more weeks before resistance on the planet was put down.

Centauri Prime: Keeping up appearances

By REID HUPACH

CENTAURI MOGRALIAN

DURING the strife of the Shadow War the Centauri Republic saw how effective the White Star had been in battle. Several members of the Military Command decided that such a ship would be a great asset for the Imperial Fleet. Several designs were proposed, but due to economic restraints it was decided to use a Mograth hull.

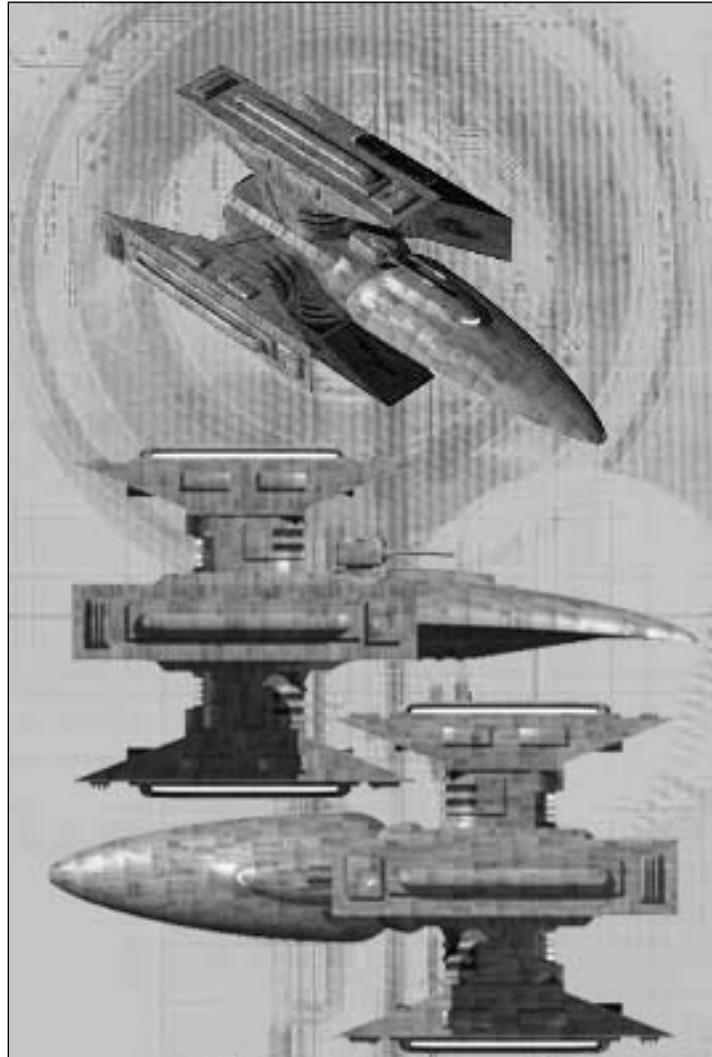
After replacing the Plasma Streamer with a Battle Laser, it was also decided to replace the Matter Cannons with longer ranged Assault Lasers. By doing this they created a quick, agile ship with good long range firepower. This ship was then built and testing began.

During the testing process the Mogralian did very well when it came to long range sniping and out-maneuvering pursuit ships. Where it was lacking it was decided was in having a heavy enough punch as a solo ship to be used as a long range patrol vessel. All told only 6 were built. Although they were not considered a true success by the Centaurum, if you ask any of the military personnel who serve on them, they will claim that it was one of the best light ships they could have served on.

Since their construction, two Mogralians have seen action, both against Raiders in Centauri territory, both successfully defeated their foe, one actually forced the surrender of a Wolf Raider when the Raider found out he could not bring the Mogralian to close combat and surrendered rather than be picked apart at range.

HASSILIA MEDIUM FIGHTER

WHEN the Rutarian fighter was finally put into production, there were several Sitara fighters, which the Republic had used to test the Ion Gun with, left over. Some of these fighters had the Ion Guns removed so they could be put into the new Rutarians or were cannibalised for spare parts. These fight-



ers were offered at a bargain price to any of the houses, which wanted them.

House Tourette, being down on their luck recently, decided to buy 24 of these fighters to fill out their hangers on their house ships. When they got them they realized that the huge empty space left by the Ion Gun was going to be hard to fill. They tried several different types of weapons to fill the void but what finally seemed to fit best was when they took some of their old twin arrays out of mothball, took the two barrels apart and loaded them singly onto the fighters.

Thus was born the Hassilia Medium Fighter, named after the technician who figured out how to correctly cobble the systems together. House Tourette loaded these new fighters onto their ships

and when the Narns started to attack the neighboring systems the Hassilia went to war. House Tourette was given the assignment of protecting the left flank of the Centauri fleet. During the battle, several Hassilia pilots used their superior firepower to destroy many Frazis and Goriths, one flight was even able to penetrate the Narn fleet and do severe damage to a Dag'Kar.

Only 24 of these potent fighters were constructed and of those only 15 survived their first battle, but House Tourette still is proud of the results they got from their bargain purchase.

PEALIA CLOSE ASSAULT GUNSHIP

WHEN the Centauri first invented the Plasma Streamer it was decided

that it should be tested on a platform where several could be mounted. Going through the mothball fleet they stumbled across an old Kutai variant, which had its rear Matter Cannons removed and a hanger installed. They decided to alter this ship even further by dropping the four front Matter Cannons and installing four Plasma Streamers. After upgrading the reactor to handle the extra power needed for these weapons, the new Pealia was ready for trial.

An old Orieni hull was put out as a target, the Pealia did one pass from the front then one from the side. Both passes did severe damage to the armor on the hulk. The Centaurum was impressed with the Plasma Streamer but alas not so impressed with the Pealia. It was decided that the Plasma Streamer would be better employed on a much faster and more maneuverable hull. The Pealia was just too slow and cumbersome to make great use of the Plasma Streamer. This weapon should be in the front of a fleet making if possible the first attack on a ship. The Pealia was just too slow for this tactic. The much faster Mograth was therefore designed to fill this spot in the fleet.

The Pealia was put into service in the Imperial fleet, being assigned to it was considered by some to be an insult. Finally the Pealia was able to exonerate itself in battle. During the War of Retribution the Pealia was in the fleet which started to turn back the Narn hordes. It was used to lead a wolfpack of Demos into the Narn flagship. Though badly damaged during the attack run, it was extremely crucial to the Bin'Tak's destruction, severely weakening the armor and structure so the four Demos could cripple the ship and then the Bin'Tak was ignominiously destroyed by a wing of Sentriss. After the battle, the Pealia was repaired but as of yet not seen action again. The Centaurum has decided to keep it around but has it assigned only to a large force which it can support.

STARFIRE ENFORCER

INTERSTELLAR ALLIANCE PATROL SHIP PROGRAM



There are simply not enough White Stars to meet the requirements of the Rangers. And production - since the departure of the Vorlons - is slow. The Anla'Shok are desperate for a new ship of similar capabilities, but the White Star's technology is not fully understood. This ship, the Starfire, represents their attempt to build a new ship to patrol the spacelanes and enforce the peace of the Interstellar Alliance.



ENFORCING A SAFER ALLIANCE

THE White Star was an amazing little ship. Not only was it technologically years in advance of anything else in the Interstellar Alliance, it also had the perfect mix of speed, maneuverability, firepower and size.

Because of its abilities, it was forced to the forefront of the Shadow War.

The White Star fleet rose to the challenge, but at a price.

Fully half their number were destroyed.

Once the Shadow War was over, the White Stars remained in high demand. With the formation of the Interstellar Alliance, every border incident, every mysterious shipping loss prompted urgent calls from member states for the Rangers and their famous White Stars.

White Stars are small but powerful ships. But they remain individually vulnerable against most capital vessels.

It was always intended that the White Stars

patrol individually, using their superior speed to withdraw from an engagement. A wolfpack of White Stars would then quickly form, using their massed power and maneuverability to swiftly cut down any opponent.

That was the doctrine.

Because of this White Star were used often. And used hard.

Naturally, the fleet took heavy losses.

These losses were compounded by the Anla'Shok's distorted code of honor.

And as the White Star fleet diminished, their wolfpacks shrunk.

As the wolfpacks shrunk, the White Stars became ever more individually vulnerable...

POLITICS

The operational White Star construction facilities were completely unable to match attrition rates. Much of the technology - installed by the

Vorlons - was simply not understood and could not be replicated.

But the Interstellar Alliance's new police force - the Rangers - needed a highly versatile and capable patrol boat.

While the Interstellar Alliance formed several combined fleets with ships sourced from member state navies, the Rangers had a completely different set of requirements.

Patrol.

Reconnaissance.

Enforcement.

And, as an interstellar police and peace keeping force, the Rangers needed the prestige of having the absolute best possible ships utilising the most advanced technology available.

Naturally, this meant the White Star.

Their ranks swelling with fresh volunteers and with responsibilities growing daily, the Rangers found themselves desperately short of ships.



STARFIRE ENFORCER

INTERSTELLAR ALLIANCE PATROL SHIP PROGRAM

By 2265, the need for ships to supplement the White Star was vital.

Only 80 remained in service.

Old Minbari Anla'Shok scout vessels were pressed into front-line service, such as ships of the Liandra class. Other classes, such as the Torotha, were hastily adapted.

But there were new designs on the drawing boards. Collaborative efforts involving the best of available Interstellar Alliance technology. These included classes such as the Neroon corvette, the Valen diplomatic transport and others.

But, being collaborative efforts, the tender process rapidly degenerated into an intensely political exercise. Each race wanted concessions for the technological secrets they were giving up, each wanted a lion's share of the contract work...

The Neroon corvettes were rapidly put into service. But they quickly proved unsuitable for the independent nature of Ranger operations.

The Valen proved to be even more of a nightmare. What resulted was the fastest, most heavily armed chauffeured limousine in the Galaxy. But it had minimal armor and steered like a cow.

The Religious Caste and the Anla'Shok were very concerned about the impending crisis.

The Neroon corvette and Valen proved political compromises would likely not produce the kind of vessel needed to patrol the borders of the Alliance.

And their first glance at the plans for the Victory Class confirmed their worst fears.

Earth Force had effectively hijacked the program. It was clear these ships would be enormous, expensive and require large crews. They would never be an economically viable replacement for the much smaller and more flexible White Star.

These were ships of the line. Not patrol boats.

What was needed was the responsiveness of an advanced police vessel - not the political posturing of a super battleship.

What was needed was more White Stars.

But reproducing the vital Vorlon technological components of these little ships was proving difficult.

Adaptive armor, organic skins and power systems could all be produced - in limited quantities - from the original construction yards and vats. But it was proving surprisingly hard to replicate these processes.

The Vorlons had encoded the genetic building blocks of their organic technology too well.

DESIGN REQUIREMENTS

The Anla'Shok and secretly began to work on reconstructing the White Star out of known technology. They knew an all Minbari project would not suit the political climate.

But, initially, it seemed a reworked White Star would be the only viable option in the long term.

The Anla'Shok were confident of the outcome. Afterall, the nimble Torotha Assault Ship had been the product of purely Minbari technology.

on an improved Tinashi-grade hull, the Shantavi class.

Early design requirements for the new ship accepted the need for a larger hull - largely because of the space consumed by larger generators for the Minbari sourced compact jump engines and increased armor protection.

But this was not regarded to be a significant problem. The Anla'Shok used the growth in hull size to improve endurance for extended patrols and provide better servicing facilities for the four small craft it could carry.

However, the new design did not require a significantly larger crew than the White Star.

Compensation for the lack of self repair technology and EM shielding was to be provided in the form of thicker armor protection. The added weight was considered a necessary tradeoff.

But the slightly larger hull also allowed a heavier weapon outfit to be carried. Fusion Cannons were immediately seen as a viable option of improving the design's offensive firepower.

The new design was given the project name "Starfire".

DESIGN B

Breakthroughs in grafting cultures of the organic adaptive armor sheathing used on the White Stars allowed a diluted form of this material to be molded onto the Starfire's hull. This was regarded as especially important for a front-line Anla'Shok vessel due to the largely unknown nature of its opponents.

It also provided for a significant weight saving, as more traditional armor materials could be scaled back.

The weapon system, like the White Star, was built around a single large Improved Neutron Laser in the nose and Molecular Pulsars. These were supplemented in the Starfire by twin Fusion Cannon pods in the outrigger engine nacelles.

The Fusion Cannons were chosen over additional Molecular Pulsar mounts for their superior anti-fighter fire control systems.

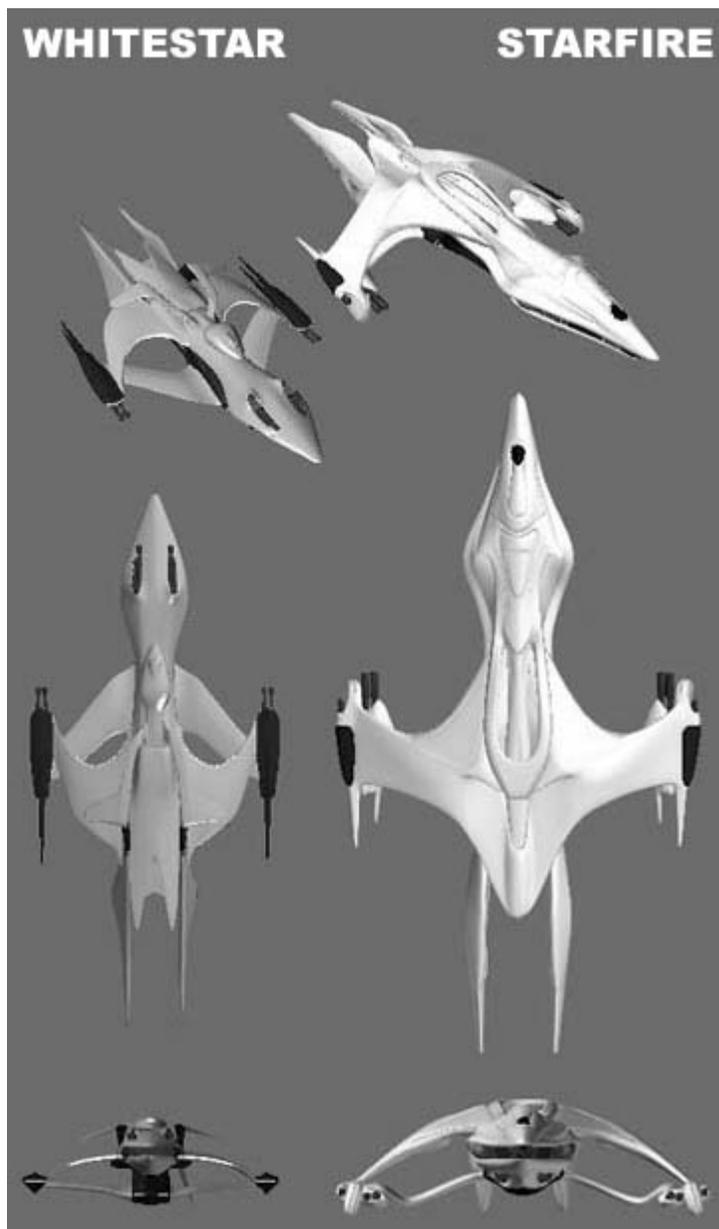
REVISION 2

The protection of the Starfire was of great concern. If possible, it was to have better armor than the White Star.

At the very least it was to be similar.

But the added weight of conventional armor materials would significantly reduce the Starfire's speed and manoeuvrability.

The EM Shield was believed to be the solution.



The original White Star had been a Minbari project that had received considerable Vorlon technical support. Now, the engineers assigned to that project were directed to revisit their original plans - and to reconstruct as well as they could any Vorlon input.

The molecular pulsar and the improved neutron laser had been Minbari designs - though, admittedly, Vorlon technical advice had helped iron out the bugs quicker than usual...

These weapons had already been incorporated



STARFIRE ENFORCER

INTERSTELLAR ALLIANCE PATROL SHIP PROGRAM

But, Alliance engineers had still not cracked how they worked...

Eventually, the Rangers sent a secret, high-level delegation to the Abbai. It is rumored that The One was among them. No details of that meeting have ever been revealed. However, Abbai gravitic shield engineers were shortly after assigned to the Starfire project...

REVISION 3

As the Starfire was larger and less agile than the White Star, vulnerability to fighter attack weighed heavily upon designer's minds.

In a controversial move, two Electro-pulse barbettes (small turrets) were added under the main wing/support structure for point defence.

Two more Electro-pulse guns were proposed outboard of the engine nacelles to provide broader forward firing arcs.

This was a further attempt to overcome the White Star's one major weakness - defence against fighters.

REVISION 4

Once again, concern for the Starfire's survivability in combat against fighters prompted a revision of the design requirements.

Experience had shown the Electro-pulse guns to fall short of the expectations placed upon it for point-defence.

But it remained a light and energy efficient weapon system - ideal for the light turrets already incorporated into the support spar's structural design.

To improve anti-fighter firepower, the Starfire's designers were made aware of separate project: the Molecular Pulsar Development Program.

This program was tasked with the responsibility of developing Minbar's next generation of weapon systems. The proven effectiveness of the Molecular Pulsar on the White Stars and the Shantavi frigates placed it at the heart of this development program.

One new weapon system had reached prototype phase: a Light Molecular Pulsar.

The Electro Pulse mounts outboard of the engine nacelles were revised to hold one of these weapons each.

STARFIRE PROTOTYPE

Minbari and Abbai engineers were eventually able to present an engineering model based on these design requirements to the Ranger Council. It depicted a ship that looked very reminiscent of the White Star, only bulkier. It's capabilities were at the forefront of available technology and, in some few areas, surpassed that of the White Star.

But the anticipated problems were clearly evident. It had lost the extreme manoeuvrability of the White Star. And it suffered from power sup-

ply shortfalls.

But it was the best Alliance technology could produce.

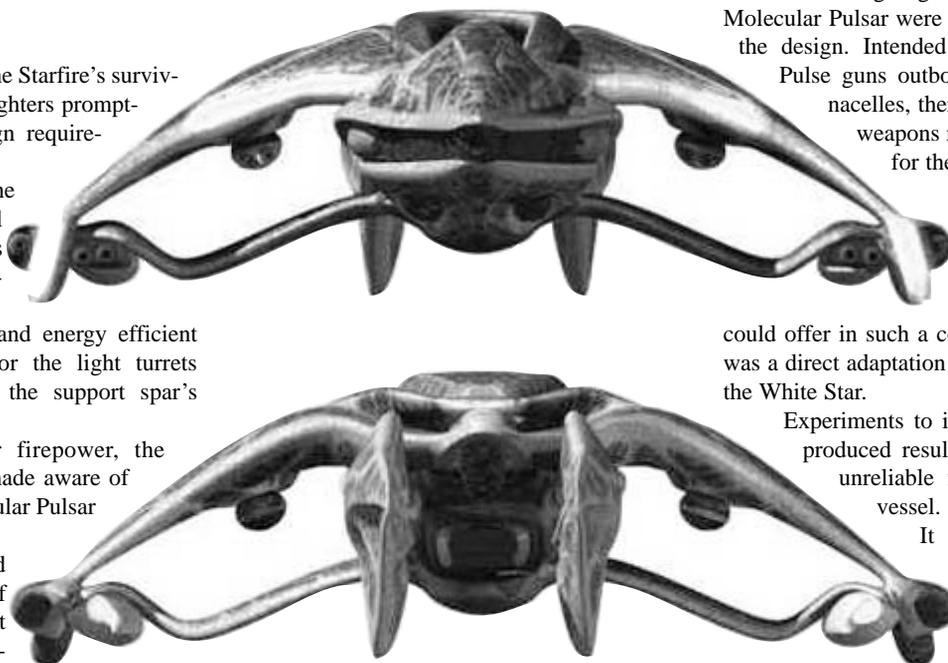
It also provided a ship that had greater endurance - both in terms of flight time and combat damage.

And it could be built immediately, in the numbers necessary to restore the Rangers' depleted forces.

The main anticipated source of concern was the supply of the new and un-tested Light Molecular Pulsars. Production facilities were still under construction.

Fallback plans were put into motion to complete some initial Starfires - if the hoped-for construction contracts went through - with the originally intended Electro Pulse mounts.

These could be retrofitted at a later date when enough Light Molecular Pulsars had been produced.



ARMAMENT

One Improved Neutron Cannon:

This was a newly proven and reliable design with a very flexible fire control system.

Positioned in an ocular mount in the bow of the ship, it had a particularly good field of fire.

Four Fusion Cannons:

These were paired in pods attached to the underwing support strut against the outrigger engine nacelles. Chosen over Molecular Pulsars for their superior anti-fighter targeting systems, the decision remains controversial. While the pairing of the cannons increased their vulnerability, it provided weight savings in the form of reduced coolant ducting and power conduits. These cannons also had a narrow forward arc of fire, but this was not considered a problem given the Starfire's manoeuvrability.

Two Molecular Pulsars:

These were fitted under the main bow structure in an arrangement very similar to that of the White Star. They were included to supplement the Fusion Cannons because of their variable rate of fire and power settings. Once again, flexibility in a Ranger vessel was considered vital.

Two Electro Pulse Guns:

Two barbettes under the wings gave the Starfire additional anti-fighter protection. The effectiveness of this system has caused considerable controversy - with some designers saying the Starfire should, like the White Star, rely on enhanced agility and main weapon systems for defence. Counter to this argument is that the White Star was vulnerable to fighters, and the Starfire - with its greater size and reduced mobility - would be even more so.

Two Light Molecular Pulsars:

These cutting-edge developments of the Molecular Pulsar were a last minute addition to the design. Intended to replace the Electro Pulse guns outboard of the main engine nacelles, there is some concern these weapons may not be ready in time for the initial production run.

SENSORS:

The sensor suite attached to the Starfire was the best the Minbari could offer in such a compact size. In effect, it was a direct adaptation of that already found on the White Star.

Experiments to improve this system had produced results determined to be too unreliable for a front-line combat vessel.

It is considered that the White Star grade sensor suite is sufficiently effective to see it used well into the Starfire's service life without the need for replacement.

But the true effectiveness of this sensor suite has been called into doubt: technicians had proven capable of replicating the Vorlon-enhanced technology aboard the White Star. However, they remain uncertain as to exactly what much of it is used for...

POWERPLANT:

The heart of the Starfire is a modified version of the compact reactor used in the Torotha Assault Frigate. The decision to use this reactor was made to reduce the already considerable construction cost of the Starfire - and provide from the outset a system that was known to be reliable - even if its power output was deficient.

White Star crews are already well used to the need to manage power requirements carefully. Thus it is not considered to be a major operational problem for the Starfire.



PROTECTION:

Hull Armor:

Overall, the thickness of the structural armored shell is only slightly thicker than that of the White Star. Proposals to increase this thickness further immediately demanded greater structural support (and thus weight) and more powerful engines to maintain the desired levels of mobility.

Shields:

The Abbai - the only Interstellar Alliance race with shield technology - were able to adapt their Gravitic Shields to Minbari Gravitic drive systems to provide compact generators. Despite the many challenges - chief among them size constraints - the designers have produced shields of similar capability to the Vorlon supplied EM variety. By Abbai standards, these shields are not very powerful. But they are very small.

Adaptive Armor: Despite intensive efforts, the adaptive organic armor cultures derived from the Vorlon originals remained weaker than the originals. However, the adaptability of this skin to unknown weapon systems was considered a vital component of Ranger patrol craft. It was accepted and integrated into the design.

Powerplant:

The Starfire was never going to be a fully powered craft. Size limitations on the engines provided no other choice.

But the patrol frigate needed a variety of weapon types and damage redundancy.

Designers intended to give the Starfire enough free power to keep a workable mix of its primary and secondary armament on line.

Such configuration could, of course, be varied with any number of the weapons powered up at the expense of systems elsewhere.

MOBILITY:

The size of the Starfire was the designer's most difficult challenge: how to pack the same firepower as the Vorlon-assisted White Star into a medium-class hull.

This imperative had weighed on every decision.

The designers produced a superstructure that was larger than a White Star, but smaller than a Torotha Assault Frigate.

This size, combined with the best compact powerplant the Minbari could assemble, gave

the Starfire only marginally less mobility than the White Star.

Nevertheless, it could still be out-accelerated and out-turned by its smaller cousin. But the Starfire's greater firepower and endurance was considered a worthy tradeoff.

And it was a very close match for a ship that had little of the First One's input.

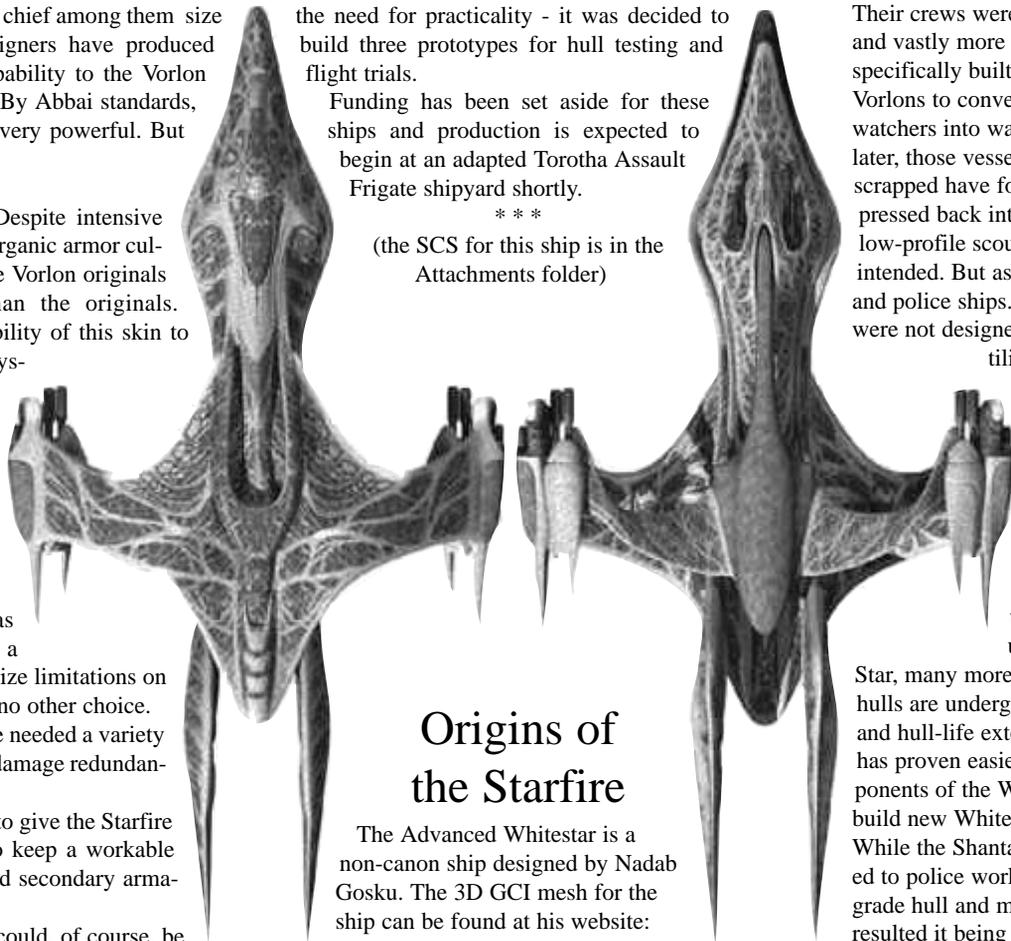
CONCLUSION

The Starfire Enforcer proposal was well received by the Ranger Council. However, the anticipated political opposition to the program once it was made public was strong.

After considerable debate - involving a direct appeal by The One to the Alliance Council for the need for practicality - it was decided to build three prototypes for hull testing and flight trials.

Funding has been set aside for these ships and production is expected to begin at an adapted Torotha Assault Frigate shipyard shortly.

(the SCS for this ship is in the Attachments folder)



Origins of the Starfire

The Advanced Whitestar is a non-canon ship designed by Nadab Gosku. The 3D GCI mesh for the ship can be found at his website: www.eon3d.com.

Nadab posted progress reports for the ship on the b5mg graphics web-page, from where I grabbed most of these images.

Instead of creating another White Star clone, Nabad decided to create something totally new in order to test some new hull texturing techniques. He draw most of the texturers on a wacom board, which helped create the distinctive vein patterns.

Naturally the design was created for purely visual purposes - without the B5W game system in any consideration.

But it is a distinctive design that is clearly different - but derived - from the excellent White Star. Thus it deserves a place on the B5W gamers table

Plugging the gaps

THE task of patrolling all the borders between the nations of the Interstellar Alliance is an enormous job.

The Rangers need a visible presence on all the shipping lanes. But, in 2265, the 80 or so surviving White Stars were simply not up to the job. Other ships had to be pressed into service.

Liandra Class Patrol Ship

These old vessels, once utilised by the Anla'Shok to scout the rim systems, were retired during the Shadow War. Their crews were moved to the new and vastly more capable White Stars - specifically built by the Minbari and Vorlons to convert the Rangers from watchers into warriors. Ten years later, those vessels that had not been scrapped have found themselves pressed back into service. Not as low-profile scouts, as they were intended. But as high profile escorts and police ships. It was a task they were not designed for. But their versatility renders them adequate - until new ships render them irrelevant.

Shantavi Frigates

Originally simply Religious Caste tiered ships for new technologies to be used on the White

Star, many more of these old Tinashi hulls are undergoing extensive refit and hull-life extension programs. It has proven easier to build some components of the White Star than to build new White Stars themselves. While the Shantavi is not ideally suited to police work, its flexible frigate-grade hull and modern systems have resulted it being successfully pressed into Rangers service. However, no degree of refit can reverse the effects of age. These vessels are not expected to remain fully serviceable beyond 10 years.

Neroon Class Corvettes

This is a new class of Minbari small combattant that may prove to be the Starfire's main competitor. Built to a familiar tri-fin Minbari design, concerns have been raised about its levels of protection and speed. While it boasts strong firepower, several have been lost in engagements with Raider fighters. This ship's suitability is undergoing review, with several modification programs proposed.

Grome Brakar Gunboats

By BEN RUBERY

One of the limitations of the Grome fleet is its vulnerability to wolfpack tactics. Its lumbering ships have proved easy meat for Drazi squadrons that slip into blindspots and dig away at the larger lumbering vessels. The Grome fleet command commissioned a number of projects to try and solve this problem, and the most enterprising was the brainchild of a young Grome engineer, Tavas Madah, who looked at reports from Grome/Raider battles, and footage of the Great Conquest March. He decided on a nimble (in Grome terms) gunboat, able to hunt fighters and small craft, and act as a fast escort for either Grome fighter wings or massive cruisers. Fleet command commissioned eight of these craft, and placed them in two groups of four, in fleets bordering the Hurr. During a skirmish with the Hurr, these ships headed off an Orak squadron that threatened to flank the fleet flagship, crippling one of them, and in the same battle repelled a fighter strike targetting a cruiser. The Admiral in charge of the fleet was extremely pleased with their performance, and gave them a glowing report on their combat trials. The various projects were then presented to the Margus for approval, and a further production run of escort frigates was approved, the Brakar gunboat being rejected as "too small to be effective" and "no more than an enlarged shuttle". The designer's angry response to these comments led to his execution the following day, and the admiral who sponsored his presentation is currently under a cloud, unlikely to advance his career further. The remaining gunboats were placed in the anti-raider patrol forces, little more than a glorified early warning system consisting of failed prototypes and obsolete (even by Grome standards) ships. No more will be produced, and the class has gone down in Grome engineering history as a warning to know your target audience, and to keep your mouth shut if a decision goes against you.

Gromarth bombardment cruiser prototype

By KEVIN CHRISTIE
& CHRIS SIEFERT

BACKGROUND

DURING the Dilgar War, the Grome saw how outclassed they were compared to most other races' technology. This initiated an era (somewhat short-lived) of rapid research and development during which the Grome tried to advance their ship and weapon technology towards the levels of other, more powerful races. One weapon that particularly impressed Grome military officials was the Hyach's Spinal Laser. The Grome admiralty desired such a weapon, for use as a single-shot "ship killer" as well as a planetary bombardment role.

Thus began a very expensive program to create a matter version of the weapon using the Grome's own technology - the Spinal Railgun. The prototype vessel, based on a Mogorta hull, was called the Gromarth Bombardment Cruiser and began testing in 2248. To mount so large a weapon, a new Mogorta forward section had to be designed and built around the railgun. This reduced the amount of damage the section could take, as well as forced the removal of two medium railguns and the downgrade of the remaining guns to light railguns. As the massive centerpiece of the ship, the Spinal Railgun has a massive damage potential, but also many major flaws. Not the least of these flaws was the tendency for the weapon to overload, causing significant damage to the ship. To compound this problem, many of the normal safety systems connecting the weapon to the fusion reactor had to be removed or reduced, in order for the weapon to have enough power to be useful in battle. The dangerous nature of this design decision became apparent during another "incident" during testing of the prototype. A failure/overload almost caused a fusion reactor containment

breach, which would have destroyed both the ship, as well as the shipyard facility to which it was docked.

In addition, the redesigned Mogorta hull was sometimes not strong enough to take the stresses of the weapon's firing, especially during overloads. This sometimes caused light to moderate damage to the hull during mishaps. Other major flaws included humongous power consumption, limited ammunition carrying capacity (8 shots), and an almost glacial rate of fire.

The Grome also attempted to create spinal-sized versions of two of the special shells listed in Showdowns-7 (Flash and Pulse shells) but were unsuccessful in making the technology scale up. However, the Grome did succeed in allowing the weapon to fire in a "low power" mode. This reduces damage, but as it has a much lower load on the weapon's power system, the chances of a weapon overload or failure are reduced. To reflect this, the player may choose to fire the spinal railgun as a medium railgun instead.

The statistics for the weapon, if fired in this mode, are identical to that of a normal heavy railgun. When firing in this mode, the player adds a -5 modifier to the weapon failure role.

Fortunately for the Grome, the project leaders did not let the notorious Grome racial pride get the better of them. In 2251, after several much-publicized test firings at mothballed or obsolete warship and freighter hulks (done at a safe distance from other ships and bases in the event of any more "incidents"), the project was quietly scrapped. The first (and only) prototype vessel was put in mothballs at the primary Grome shipyard, where it remains a testament to the "magnificent ingenuity of the Grome nation" to most of the citizenry, and a foolhardy and expensive failure to its designers and naval leaders.

(SCS in the Attachments folder)



The Battle of Punta Stilo

Fleet Action Scenario By ALEX ROBERTS

Week 20 of the Narn-Centauri War Maroth System - Punta Stilo transit

THE war has been going poorly for the Narn. System after system is falling to a revitalized and newly aggressive Centauri fleet. Centauri forces are streaming into the Maroth system. The Narn are mobilizing what forces are available to stop the Centauri at the Punta Stilo transit, the only clear path through a dense asteroid field that lies between Maroth and the Centauri's jump points. The Narn need to slow the Centauri to allow enough refugee transports to get off of Maroth and out of the system.

Loyalist Mission Statement:

Your small fleet has no where near enough forces to stop the Centauri from taking Maroth. However, the Centauri forces are entering the system in waves, and are not interested in letting the Narn escape Maroth only to fortify the Narn Homeworld. You must stall the advancing waves of Centauri ships long enough to allow your transports to evacuate Maroth

Task Force Leader Squadron
1 Octurion (4 flights Sentries)
2 Centurions
1 Covran

Squadron Alpha
3 Kutai

Squadron Beta
2 Primus (2 flights Sentries each)
2 Maximus

Squadron Gamma
2 Decurions (2 flights Larisi each)
3 Havens

Narn Mission Statement:

The Narn are hastily moving ground troops and supplies off of their colony on Maroth and trying to move them to the Narn Homeworld in anticipation of a Centauri strike and invasion there. You must power through the Narn pickets and reach the planet in time to stop the evacuations.

Squadron Able
4 Sho'Kos

Squadron Bravo
4 Sho'Kos

Squadron Charlie
3 Rongoth
1 Ka'Toc

Squadron Delta
2 G'Quan (2 flights Frazi each)
2 Thentus

Squadron Frank
3 G'Karith (1 flight Frazi each)

Deployment:

Narn Fleet:
All ships deploy on one map side no more than 3 hexes in, at any speed up to 10. The map is not floating.

Centauri Fleet:
One Squadron appears each of turns 1-4, on the map side opposite that which the Narn player set up. The Centauri Squadrons appear in the following order, Beta, Task Force Leader, Alpha, Gamma. Each squadron may begin at any speed.

Victory Conditions:

Narns:
Total Victory: At least one squadron remains on the map not routed or destroyed by the end of turn 6
Marginal Victory: Destroy or rout 2 Centauri squadrons as well as (or including) the Centauri Octurion.

Loyalists:
Total Victory: Destroy or rout all Narn ships before the end of turn 6.
Marginal Victory: Destroy or rout Narn Squadrons Charlie, Delta, and Frank without losing the Octurion.

FORTRESS

Between a rock and a hard place

Edited by
CHRIS NASIPAK

2264: The Drakh have occupied an obscure Centauri supply base in the Dorakis quadrant. Somehow, they've surrounded the base with a dense asteroid field, nearly impossible to navigate. The small Drakh Raiders are able to make it through fairly easily, but any larger ships find it nearly impossible without taking serious damage. The only solution to the Drakh problem is to bring forward a fleet capable of navigating the asteroid field and attacking the base directly.

SETUP

Place two standard maps to form a 42x60 square with a Centauri Marcanos station in hex 2530. There is a ten hex clear radius of space about the station; the next five hexes out from it are all asteroid hexes. When navigating the asteroids, treat any unit of MCV size or larger as a size larger than it actually is.

Drakh Forces:

Refer to BabCom Issue 10 for Drakh SCS's.

Outside the asteroid field:

- 2 Attack Ship
- 2 Patrol Ship
- 2 Raiders
- 1 Scout
- 3 Supply Transports

Inside the clear space surrounding the station:

- 6 Raiders

Galactic Forces:

Select up to 6,000 points worth of ships, or use one of the pre-selected battlegroups.

VICTORY CONDITIONS:

Destroy or capture the Marcanos. Any other result is a Drakh victory.

VARIANTS:

-Use any race's civilian station.

-Allowing larger vessels to cross the asteroid field may seem attractive, but is actually highly unbalancing as it permits White Stars to make the trip, and if they could do it, why would the ISA need to call in your Battle Force?

TACTICAL NOTE:

A possibility that may occur to you is to attempt to jump in directly atop the base, instead of waiting outside the asteroid field and sending in fighters and LCVs. In practice, this is possible, but very risky: you may well end up in the middle of the asteroid field, with fatal results.

Cascor First Wing (Peter Lloyd)

1x Qoccta Supercarrier- 950
2x Tacacci Strike Frigate- 880
18x Calaq Assault Fighter- 1080
6x Caltus Torpedo Fighter w/ 6 Ion Torps- 678
24x Tiqinicc Medium Fighters- 1080
40x Caccar Ultra-Light Fighters- 1320
Total: 5988

A squadron of Tiqinicc and a squadron of Caccar will remain with the ships to help hold off the Drakh attack ships. The remaining fighters will cross the asteroid field and eliminate the base and its escorts, and then return to finish off the remaining Drakh ships.

Knowledge is Power (Paul Brown)

Devastated after the War of Retribution, the Narns seek to lift themselves back into the seat of power. The spread of G'Kars new ideology does not hold the minds of all Narns, and many desire retribution against the Centauri at any cost. The discovery of the Drakh base is not only seen as a threat, but an opportunity to acquire some of that technology given to the Drakh by the now departed Shadows.

Orders sent down from the Interstellar

Alliance have required a nearby Narn Fleet to engage and destroy the base. Several high-ranking Narns with influence have asked the Warleader to first loot the base for its secrets before destroying her. But by grasping through the darkness, will the Narns become lost in the night?

WarGroup "Burning Embers" (6,000 points)

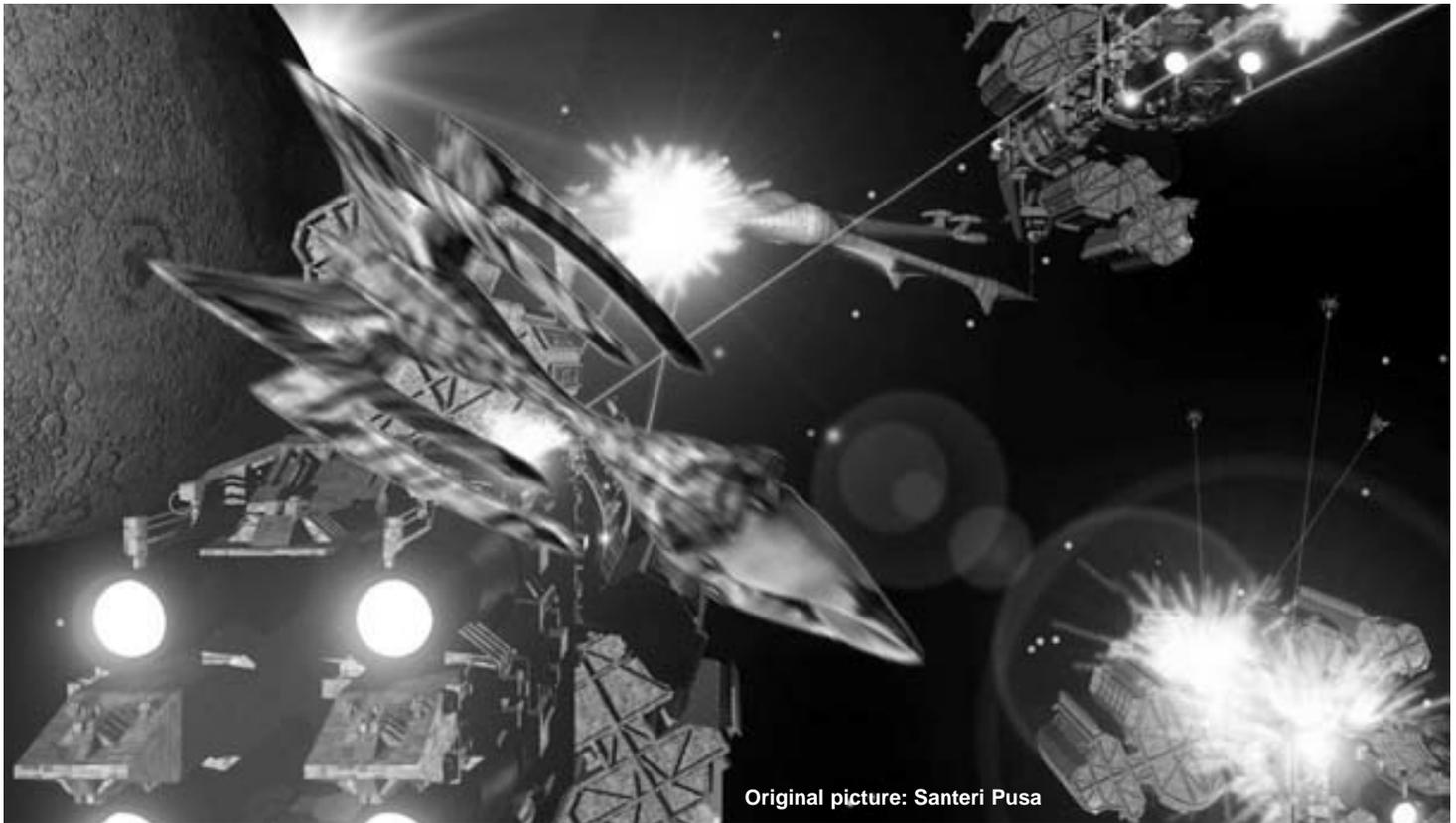
1x G'Quonth Battlecruiser
2x G'Quan Heavy Cruisers
2x T'Loth Assault Cruisers
48x Gorith Medium Fighters
21x T'Rann Assault Shuttles
8x T'Rahk Breaching Pods

The ships will stay on the perimeter of the asteroid field while the full compliment of fighters, shuttles and breaching pods enter the asteroid field. Fighters will provide cover while the Pods attach to the base, take control of the hangars and allow the shuttles to land and deposit their troops. Shuttles will then join the fighters in attacking any defending ships. Once the base has been taken over, it will be studied, looted and scuttled.

Special Rules:

In order to take control of the base, the Narns will likely need the full amount of marines. For this to happen, the shuttles must land onboard the base, and consequently the hangars must be in Narn Control.

Once onboard the base, the Marines from the Breaching Pods may perform a mission to take control of a hangar. For purposes of this scenario, treat this mission as a "Rescuing a Captive" scenario. If the raid is successful, the shuttles may begin to land without cause for alarm. If multiple contingents are onboard the base at any one time, a contingent may also perform a 'Wreaking Havoc' mission to help the team attacking the hangar. The widespread attacks will confuse the Drakh, giving the Narns a -1 surprise bonus when assaulting the hangar.



Original picture: Santeri Pusa

T'Rann Assault shuttles may also try to land in the hangar without it being under Narn control. But any such attempt would be landing into a hot zone and would instill a +4 penalty in the Delivering the Marines segment. If the marines are successful in dismounting from their shuttles, they must then try to take control of the hangar (with no bonuses other than that given for Narns).

Ultimately, the Narn goal is to take control of the base using the "Capturing a Ship" marine mission.

[Editor's note: Please feel free to adapt these rules to another race of your choice for this scenario.]

The Torata High Flight (upthairons)

News of a Drakh Base in the outlying regions of Torata territory did not initially concern the Uala caste. Like everyone else in the Interstellar Alliance, they knew the power of the Drakh as well as their insular nature. The Uala believed that if left alone, the favor would be returned. News of a Drakh Base in the outlying regions of Torata territory covertly aiding the Orova caste was another matter entirely. Inflamed with indignation and religious fervor, as well as no small amount of true concern, the Torata quickly dispatched a fleet to deal with the situation. Somewhere among the thronging billions of Orova, a surgically altered Abbai Ranger smiled...

1 Clovant Medium Scout: 650
1 Clovant Medium Scout: 650
2 Alover Scout Carriers: 1350

1 Dartoc Strike Cruiser: 650
2 Golthar Fast Cruisers: 1200
6 Tralka Medium Fighters: 330
36 Tuka Medium Fighters: 1,800
5,980 points

As per the dictates of the scenario, your fighters will bear the brunt of this battle. Torata fighters are not particularly sturdy or swift, but each and every one of them carries a pair of sledgehammers for weaponry. I suggest sending your Tukas in first. Stagger them in waves so that you can deliver their accelerator-enhanced once-every-other-round punch to the Drakh LCVs. Save your Tralkas as a reserve element and for base busting, as that will be the toughest part of the job. Due to the odd nature of Torata fleet doctrine, you've actually got an obscene amount of ELINT to play with here. Use it to make those scaly Drazi wannabes wish they'd never invaded Torata space! And remember to smash anything that comes out of the asteroids as soon as it appears. You likely won't get a second chance!

P.S. - This fleet was designed to hopefully silence those who want yet more Torata carriers. They simply AREN'T needed!

OLD ENEMIES (T JORDAN)

The Orieni watched as the Drakh, their betrayers and enemies slowly took over the Centauri, and it infuriated them. They were further distraught when they saw the ISA, a good idea in concept (especially since the founders were all brought together initially by the Gods themselves), had increasing difficulty facing the Drakh menace.

Thus, the Orieni decided it was time to make a comeback into the galaxy and use a victory against their old enemies as a stepping-stone to renewed prestige.

Holy Retribution Taskforce

2 Paragon Strike Ships
1 Benevolent Heavy Scout
42 Shining Star Heavy HK's
12 Templar fighters
18 Templar Fighters with Fighter-bomber conversion and 1 basic fighter missile each.

Total 5950, leaving 50 points to add special missiles for the Paragons.

Tactics are simple; HK's default setting is for enormous (or capital if the ELINT ship sees the base is smaller) with a few flights set for capital. The Templars use their missiles and light gatling guns to take down any Drakh LCV's that may be encountered.

VF-356 (Martin P Dessart)

2x Omega-Alpha Destroyers
24x Starfury Aurora
24x Starfury Thunderbird (Navigator, 6 missiles each)

One squadron of Auroras will remain to assist the destroyers in eradicating the Drakh ships, while the Thunderbirds and remaining Aurora squadron navigate the asteroid field and eliminate the base with heavy missile salvos.

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EDITOR:

Christopher Phang
(regret)

FICTION

Reid Hupach
(reid)

b5news_fiction
@yahoo.com

TACTICS & ARTICLES

Alexander Kettle
(squawk)

b5news_tactics
@yahoo.com
b5news_articles
@yahoo.com

SHIPS & SCENARIOS

Alex Roberts
(aroberts)

b5news_ships
@yahoo.com
b5news_scenarios
@yahoo.com

PROOFREADING

Scott McGaffin
(scottjm)

b5news_proof
@yahoo.com

PRODUCTION

Jamie Seidel
(Diogenes)

b5news_layout
@yahoo.com

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