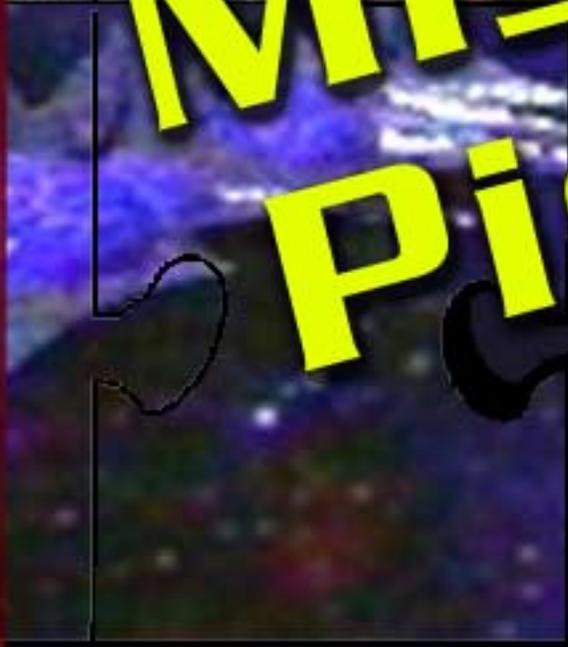


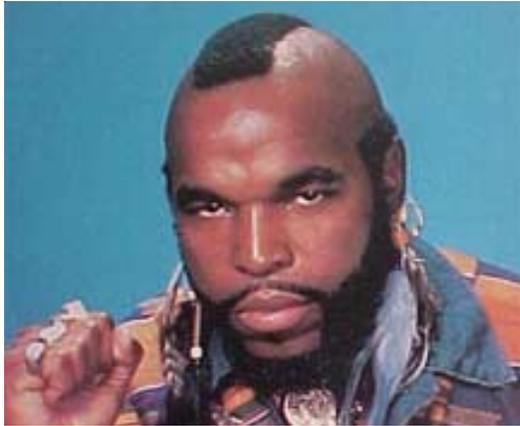
THE GREAT MACHINE

ISSUE 11 October/November 2004



Missing Pieces





Don't Gimme No Back Talk, Sucka!

Hey, quit your jibba jabba, the T is back! Thanks to the Vorlons and a lot of milk, I'm tellin' you about the new issue of the Great Machine, so listen up sucka! This time it has new guys for Star Trek. It's got Hydran Kingdoms, the Remans who busted out of their slave oppression and the robot killahs the Andromedans! I pity da foo who messes with the Andromedans!

Hey foo! You still readin' this? Don't make me mad! Grrrrrr.

We also got some Lumati and Antareans, what, what you sayin? Who are the Antareans? They're allies of the Centauri and they helped against the Orieni, so don't give me no back talk, suckah!

There's some guys from the Escalation Wars too! The Courata are tough, man, they bust up anyone in their way. But conquerin' the Circasians won't be easy! And watch out for those Vendrizzi, they got mean ships!

Finally there's some new guys from Freespace, including some human fools who were messin' with Shivan technology. That's bad news man, bad news! Unfortunately we got no Romulan War Units but they'll be comin' up real soon, so quit your worryin'.

Oh here comes that Fwiffo guy again, 'what you sayin? "Ultimate Evil?" What ultimate evil? Shut up foo!

Mr T.,
UNIVERSAL SUPER HERO

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FREESPACE CONVERSIONS

Freespace: The Great War

By Paul Brown

The Great War – A Brief History

Before the arrival of the Shivans, the Terrans and Vasudans had been involved in a long war of attrition that had lasted for more than fourteen years. The loss of Riviera installation at the hands of the Shivans in Ross 128 sent ripples through the Galactic Terran Alliance. Shivan attacks intensified as they indiscriminately attacked both Vasudan and Terran forces, with tremendous casualties on both sides. The attacks forced a cease-fire between the GTA and PVN, and the once-bitter enemies began to

work together and design advanced weaponry and shields to combat the Shivan menace.

The arrival of the Shivans also prompted a split in the Vasudan forces. As religious sects within their people resulted in the formation of the Hammer of Light, a group that believed the Shivan's arrival was the fulfilment of an ancient prophecy. As the war moved from bad to worse, the Lucifer arrived.

The Shivan Lucifer Super Destroyer outclassed any vessel in the GTA or PVN. Its armour and shielding was too strong for allied weapons to penetrate, and its Flux Cannon weaponry quickly laid waste to allied ships and installations. The flagship of the Shivan fleet, it broke through allied defensive lines and struck at the Vasudan homeworld, laying waste to it with a massive orbital bombardment.

With the GTA and PVN reeling, the Lucifer then began to move dangerously close to the Terran home system of Sol. With little chance of breaching its shields, a Shivan victory seemed inevitable. Suddenly however, ruins of an ancient civilisation destroyed by the Shivans a thousand years ago were discovered in an allied system. The Ancients had discovered the method in which to circumvent the Lucifer's shields, by attacking it in subspace, but the discovery came too late for them to carry them out. Armed with





new information, the GTA and PVN attacked the Lucifer as it transited to the Sol System, the mission successfully brought down the Lucifer but its destruction within the subspace node caused a full collapse, separating Sol from the rest of the GTA.

With the destruction of their flagship, the Shivans became disorganised and over a period of several months the GTA and PVN were able to contain and destroy the remaining elements of the Lucifer's Fleet. But not before internal conflict with both the HoL and the rogue Galactic Terran Intelligence threatened to destroy them all once again.

Reliving the Great War

I was somewhat hesitant to do the Freespace 1 conversions. Many of the ships in FS1 are identical to FS2, but without the beam weapons. This means that all of the ships, with their abundance of

structure have lost all of their high damage weapons. I was hesitant to do the conversion, because I'm not sure how many people would actually want to play them.

In the end, converting the ships took about ten minutes per ship and was quite honestly dead easy. I had everything for the fighters laid-out on paper, so I was able to finish each faction in one sitting. Only a few ships (ie Fenris, Demon) needed any larger changes, mostly in the way of reduced structure. There were only a few new ships and fighters, mostly freighters or Super Destroyers. All in all, I was finished in just a few days with the most time being spent towards guessing point values.

Great War Gameplay

Most battles in Freespace will likely be long, protracted battles with a lot of plink-plink-plink damage and little in the way of explosions. Most ships are armed with the equivalent of a few light or medium pulse

cannons. If you take them at their Terran-Vasudan war values, and compare them to Fighter weapons like the ML-16 Laser they can be quite bearable. But as soon as allied fighters get Great War era weapons, the ship's armament is laughable and inadequate.

The conversion actually offers two games, one pre-Great War with pathetic fighters which need missiles to breach the heavy armour of bombers and ships. And Great War games, where fighters have shields and better weapons and bigger bombs. Both have the potential to be enjoyable, though any Freespace battles might be better played out on an online PBEM where time restrictions are not an issue.

For the sake of battles in the Terran-Vasudan war (before the Shivans came), I've assembled a list of fighter weapons which are available during that time frame, and those which come after the Shivan contact. You can tell which fighters are available pre-Great War by their ISD and whether they have ML-16/Vasudan lasers as a weapon option.

Pre-Great War Weapons

- M-16/Vasudan Light Laser
- Disruptor
- MX-50
- Fury
- Interceptor
- Stiletto
- Tsunami
- Phoenix V

Great War and Beyond

- Avenger
- Prometheus
- Advanced Disruptor
- Banshee
- Flail
- Shield Breaker
- Hornet
- Cluster Bomb
- Synaptic Bomb
- EMP Missile
- Harbinger

Flux Cannon

People may notice that this weapon is very different from the larger monstrosity found on the Sathanas. I feel it's necessary to explain the reasoning behind the somewhat hard to believe statistics.

In Freespace 2, gamers were introduced to capital ship beams. Ships blasted one another with honest to goodness beams of wonderful destruction, cutting into one another, and piercing each-others very hulls. But beams played a role in Freespace 1 as well, on the Lucifer Destroyer. The problem is, that Freespace 1 didn't really have in-game beams. Such programming was as of yet unavailable, so instead the Lucifer's Beam Cannon was really a very fast, invisible missile with a long trail of smoke behind it (which simulated the beam). At its core, the Flux Cannons of the Lucifers were missile launchers and consequently they had set damage and if they hit they did that exact damage, there was no chance for variation.

So for the Flux Cannon, as I tried to simulate the game I stayed true to the weapons behaviour. It may be unrealistic as far as B5Wars weapons go, but it serves its purpose.

Sheath Shielding

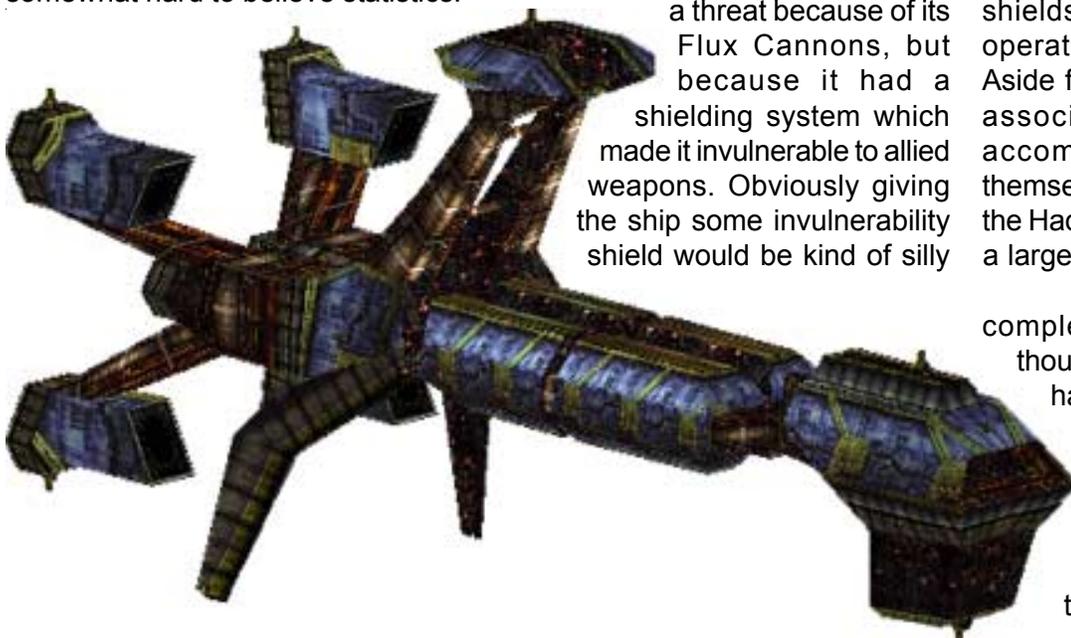
In Freespace 1, the Lucifer Super Destroyer was not only a threat because of its Flux Cannons, but because it had a shielding system which made it invulnerable to allied weapons. Obviously giving the ship some invulnerability shield would be kind of silly

and completely unplayable. Instead, combined with its high armour I've given it what is basically an EM shield. The higher value and special effect against Flash weapons means it's invulnerable to allied-weapons of Great War-era, but it is not necessarily invulnerable to other weapons from other settings. Especially as the beam weapons in FS2 all 'ignore shields'.

Grappling with Hades

I originally wasn't too excited to do the Hades Destroyer from the Silent Death add-on but I did it in the end anyway. For those of you who aren't fans of Freespace, most people dislike the Hades. In Freespace, the Shivan Lucifer is an unstoppable destroyer with advanced beam cannons and impenetrable shields. It is only because of ancient technology found that the good guys are able to defeat it. Yet in the add-on, suddenly some rogue Intelligence group builds a Terran version of the Lucifer complete with the advanced beam weapons, and shivan turrets. The shields were supposedly not yet operational during the missions. Aside from the total disbelief factor associated with this accomplishment, the missions themselves were rather boring with the Hades serving as little more than a large target.

For the sake of completeness, I did the Hades, though with my own twist. Despite having the same structure and armour as the Lucifer, I've made the system-armour substandard. Since the shields were never finished, I took the liberty of making them only half as powerful as



Missing Pieces

the Lucifer's, and far less redundant. Finally I riddled the ship with unreliability rules for weapons misfirings, sluggishness and power fluctuations. And despite giving it multiple reactors like the Hades, it only takes one to be destroyed for the whole she-bang to go up in flames.

New Units in this Issue

Hades Super Destroyer

The Hades is the project of rogue factions within Galactic Terran Intelligence. Analysts believe that the main goal of the project was to recreate the Lucifer. If successful, the Hades would represent the greatest threat to the Terran Alliance since the destruction of the Shivan Super Destroyer. Allied intelligence suggests that the ship is not yet fully operational, the GTA therefore must strike and destroy the Hades while the opportunity presents itself.

Athena Light Bomber

The Athena light bomber has served the GTA well, since its introduction during the Terran-Vasudan war. Sometimes mistaken for a fighter, the Athena is designed to work in tandem with allied bombers to bring down Cruisers or other targets. For this task the Athena is typically equipped with anti-subsystem weapons such as Disrupters and Stiletos.

Anubis Light Fighter

The weakest fighter in service with the Parliamentary Vasudan Navy, the Anubis is only a minor threat to our forces. With little in the way of weaponry or secondary weapons, it does not pack much

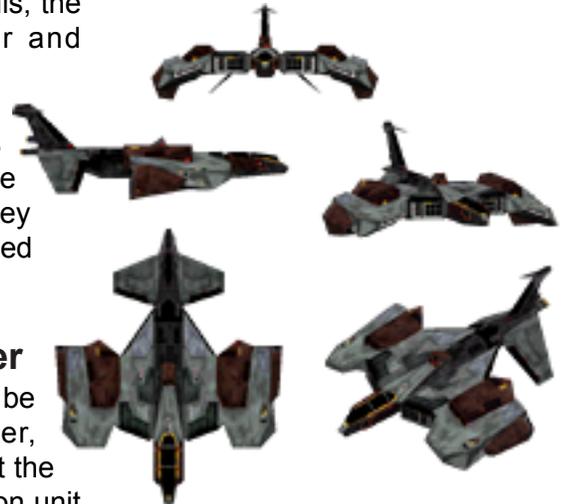
offensive punch. On top of this, the fighter has woeful armour and inadequate acceleration capability. The greatest threat these fighters represent is perhaps most evident in the crippling Kamikaze attacks they sometimes employ against allied vessels.

Scorpion Light Fighter

Originally believed to be the Shivan's primary fighter, allied analysts now know that the Scorpion is only a light attrition unit or scout fighter. The unusual design has a stronger hull than most Shivan fighters, and fairly good shields. Its manoeuvrability and speed are only average, though it is still a very good match for older Terran and Vasudan Fighters.

* * *

All other units from Freespace such as the Apollo, Lucifer and others can be found on the new Freespace 1 section of the <http://knossos.firenebula.com>, which should become available in the hours following the release of this issue of the Great Machine.





Star Fleet Battles Conversion: The Andromedans

The Arrival of a SFB Menace: The Mysterious Andromedans

By Geoffrey Stano

History of the Andromedan Invaders

One of the Alpha Quadrant's most mysterious races is the Andromedans. According to official records, the Andromedans were first observed operating in the Alpha Quadrant in 2257. However, there are persistent rumors that the Andromedans have been operating in this region of space for far longer, with some claims dating back to 2198. The initial reaction to the Andromedans by all of the races was that they were simply a nomadic group moving through the Quadrant. For the most part, sightings of Andromedans were extremely rare and 3 sightings a year would have been a busy year. In addition, these "nomads" would not receive the name Andromedans for many years to come. After 2257, the sightings were beginning to increase to several a month and an occasional raid on a far flung outpost. These actions made the various Alpha Quadrant races take notice and attempt to get a better understanding of who and what the Andromedans were. Despite several major attempts, no communications or contact beyond a sighting or skirmish had occurred through 2260. The best information available was that the Andromedans were indeed not from this local section of the galaxy. However, by late 2260 other galactic affairs were becoming more pressing as the

Andromedan sightings began to diminish and it was felt that the vivid green ships of these nomads were already moving to new places.

This theory took a dramatic twist with several events, starting in 2268. Almost simultaneously, most of the major races underwent heavy raids and attacks into their territories by the nomadic Andromedans. Some reports suggested that the Andromedans were invading and capturing several independent, but low-tech worlds throughout the quadrant. Andromedan targets included weakly defended industrial centers and resource production centers. While attempts were made to track the attackers, no one was able to catch one. While this was occurring there was the first contact event between a race called the Kelvans, who tried to hijack the Enterprise under James T. Kirk's command. Kirk had learned that the Kelvans were the advance guard for the Kelvan Empire, who were scouting the Milky Way galaxy for a new home. It was learned that the Kelvan's home galaxy, Andromeda, was becoming flooded with radiation and was no longer habitable for the Kelvans. The Enterprise crew was successful in regaining control of their ship and the event was logged to Star Fleet Headquarters. Initially, no connection was made between the Kelvans and the mysterious nomadic raiders operating across the Alpha Quadrant. By August 2268, the Federation had located several other small bands of Kelvans and realized that the original story presented to the Enterprise was not entirely correct. These new Kelvans were, indeed, looking for a new home in the Milky Way galaxy. The reason for the unheard of inter-galactic move was much more ominous than their homes slowly being irradiated.

The Kelvan Remnant, as they called themselves, were fleeing from Andromeda since they were being

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persued by a race that they would eventually call the Invaders. The Kelvans had been rulers of a large empire in their home galaxy that had existed roughly since 1182 on the Earth calendar. The Kelvan Empire was exemplified by its heavy use of military and economic campaigns to conquer and incorporate other races within their sphere of influence, much like Earth's Roman Empire. For the most part, the Kelvans were exceedingly efficient in their conquests and were quite vicious in putting down any sort of rebellion against their domain. One of the last races the Kelvans encountered would later become the Invaders. Initially, the Invaders were a large power that the Kelvans were encroaching upon in their expansions. Seeing a potentially dangerous rival, the Kelvans declared war on this race in 1691. The major reason that the Kelvans chose to conquer the Invaders was because of their supposedly lower technology. The Invaders did not have access to shield technology and relied upon thick armor, which made their ships sluggish, and Energy Dampeners, similar to the ones used by the Andorians in the 2100's. The primary Invader deficiency was in warp technology. The Invaders were, strategically, incapable of very high warp speed. In a tactical setting, the Invaders were able to hold their own against the Kelvans, but their inability to react properly in a strategic sense gave the initiative to the Kelvans.

As the war progressed, the Kelvans noted their success against the Invaders and also realized that the Invader ships did not have any live crew. In fact, Invader worlds were never seen with any sort of biological Invader, although huge agricultural and ranching establishments were found across many Invader worlds. For whatever reason, the Invaders chose to fight with robotic warriors. The Kelvans assumed that the Invaders were very advanced in artificial intelligence and were confident that the beings behind the robots would be found as the assaults ground their way into Invader space.

A sudden and dramatic turning point occurred in late 1697 when the Invaders launched a massive attack at a Kelvan staging area. What made this attack so different was the suicidal fanaticism the Invaders showed. The Invaders were hurling themselves at the Kelvan defenders in an attempt to blast a hole through their lines. As the fight wore on, the Kelvans thought that they were slowly gaining the upper hand, despite heavy casualties. The Invaders began to regroup and surged ahead one last time...as thousands of new warp signatures entered the system. The Invaders had used the attack fleet to open a path for literally thousands of

anti-matter armed missiles to target the planet and defending base. Despite the heroic efforts of the Kelvans, half of the missiles detonated simultaneously, totally incinerating all naval forces from both sides and utterly devastating the Kelvan world.

The war, ironically, froze as the Invaders ceased attacks against the Kelvans and pulled out of every contested system. In a state of shock, after the viciousness, even by Kelvan standards, of the loss of their forward supply center, the Kelvans too pulled back. It was deemed that the Invaders had to be utterly destroyed and the Kelvan navy would be allowed to use any means necessary to end the Invaders. This was the critical moment in the war. In later records captured by the Kelvans, it was found that the Invaders had used almost all of their industrial base to create the anti-matter storm over the Kelvan base in 1697. It had been a desperate attempt to stall the Kelvans for a significant time, while new technologies that had been researched by the Invaders were rushed into production. It appears that the Invaders had intended for their raw display of power to end the war and force the Kelvans away. However, subsequent actions by the Kelvans appeared to have spurred the Invaders on to their next move.

It took the Kelvans four years to re-establish a new forward supply base to stage operations into Invader space. In this entire time, the Invaders took no offensive actions, and were seen to pull further back into their space. In early 1702, the Kelvans renewed their assault into Invader space. In retaliation for the horrific assault in 1697, the Kelvans devastated every Invader world they captured. It was hoped that any biological Invaders deep underground would be caught by these attacks. However, the Kelvans were noting a change in the Invader's ships. They were now beginning to deploy an advanced form of Energy Dampener, which they dubbed Power Absorber Panels. Suddenly, the Invaders had ships capable of absorbing a huge amount of firepower on par with the Kelvan's own shields. The Kelvans now realized that they had to finish the Invaders off before they could deploy any new advancements. It was only a few short months after this realization that the Kelvans realized they were too late.

The dramatic Invader attack in 1697, and subsequent fall-back was to buy the Invaders time to deploy their most guarded secret, the Displacement Device. This system, which was directly connected to the ship's warp drive, partially shunted the operating ship into an alternate dimension and allowed the ship to achieve incredible strategic speeds. The device also had several useful effects in combat situations. When

installed on large motherships capable of carrying several of the Invader's new small craft with Power Absorber Panels, the Invaders could launch lightning quick raids into regions of Kelvan space that the Kelvans never dreamed the Invaders could reach. In addition, the Displacement Device allowed the attack fleet to rapidly disengage from the area and avoid pursuit. The only drawback to the Displacement Device was that dedicated routes were required. The entire system of routes was dubbed the Rapid Transit Network. While a liability if the Invader's opposition found the routes and destroyed the bases which made up the linchpins of the Network, the Invaders felt it was their only chance of survival against the Kelvans.

The deployment of the Displacement Device led to a total and complete route of the Kelvan forces. The Invaders were now able to warp into areas far behind the Kelvan lines and sow destruction among the Kelvan resources. Weakly defended planets were subjected to horrific radiation bombardment, in retaliation to the Kelvan's similar tactics on Invader worlds. The Kelvans simply could not keep up. While they fought ferociously, they could not track the new high-speed Invader forces. As their infrastructure collapsed, the Invader regular forces, augmented with Power Absorber Panels advanced and did not look back. The Invaders felt that to keep themselves secure, the Kelvans had to be destroyed to the point that they would never threaten them again. The Kelvans began scattering refugee fleets across their home galaxy in an attempt to save their people. Even with the Kelvan Empire defeated and no longer capable of fighting the Invaders, the Invaders began searching the Andromeda galaxy to defeat the scattered remnants of the Kelvans so that an unseen enclave could not discover the truth of the Rapid Transit Network and find a way to defeat the Invaders. Considering the size of the Andromeda galaxy and the relative speed of Kelvan ships, the Andromedans spent nearly 200 years searching for the Kelvans. In the early 1900s, the Kelvans knew that even their home galaxy would not be safe and elected to send whatever ships they had left into the inter-galactic void. They hoped that the Invaders would not follow and that some of their race would survive to start again. To their horror, the Invaders set to work tracking the Kelvans, wherever they went.

The Kelvans were asked who these Invaders were so that the Federation could be prepared for them if they ever came. The Kelvans showed centuries old images of vivid green ships, the same ones running rampant across the Alpha Quadrant. With the name of

their home galaxy and using the Kelvans own name for them, the nomads were termed the Andromedan Invaders.

Despite the information given by the Kelvans, the Andromedans remained a mystery. Their attacks grew in frequency and ferocity as they seemed to invade systems at random. They never contacted any of the Alpha Quadrant races, aside from some reports of working through pirates in the region for natural resources to sustain their operations. The Andromedans were in the Milky Way galaxy to defeat the Kelvan Remnant and they did whatever was necessary to that end. This led to the Andromedans being extremely unpredictable as sometimes they would invade a system and take it as their own, while other times they would leave at the first sign of opposition. The Andromedans peaked in power around 2278. All of the major races were involved in major operations to engage and remove Andromedan infestations throughout their space. The break came when the connection between the Displacement Device and the Andromedan's rapid strategic speed was discovered. This led to the discovery of the Rapid Transit Network, and soon the Alpha Quadrant races were hunting down the nodes to this network.

Scientists concluded that the Andromedans had been establishing the Network since the early 2200s and that they probably had a large base of operations in the Lesser Magellanic Cloud, outside the Milky Way galaxy. The discovery of the Network, and the apparent fleeing of the known Kelvan Remnant seemed to have ended the Andromedan Invasion. By 2300, the Andromedans were becoming less and less common and were no longer on the offensive. Sightings remain to this day of Andromedans, who appear to be watching this region of the galaxy for a return of the Kelvans. It is also believed that since the trip from the Andromeda galaxy is on the order of 200 years, based upon the strategic speed displayed by the Andromedans, the new sightings are from new arrivals to our galaxy, who were committed to the invasion long before the Andromedans ever reached the Milky Way. To this day, Andromedans are deemed extremely dangerous and are often engaged on sight.

The Andromedans

Very little is known about what an Andromedan is. All that has been seen are the robotic forces used in Andromedan colonies and starships. It is believed that there is some sort of intelligence with these machines,

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but it cannot be determined if the Invaders are sentient machines only, or incredibly intricate devices created by a biological Andromedan. The robots do not appear to act mindlessly, as in combat situations they do act to preserve themselves and will not go on suicide missions if they are not cornered. While robots, they do not receive any special abilities in boarding actions, except on sabotage missions, where specialized sabotage robots are employed with reckless abandon within enemy ships. In sabotage missions, Andromedan boarding parties receive a -2 to their die roll. Needless to say, Andromedans loose aboard a ship can be a disastrous experience.

The Andromedans also demonstrate other characteristics of not being mindless automatons. During the period of the Andromedan Invasion, the Andromedans developed several, supposedly new, ship classes and modifications. The Andromedans did show an ability to adapt to changing situations both strategically and tactically. However, Andromedan technological advancement in the Milky Way galaxy seems to have peaked by around 2300. After this time, the Andromedans are no longer seen operating any new classes of ships. This may indicate that the Andromedans have moved on, or are simply not allowing the Alpha Quadrant races to see any new classes. The most widely accepted theory is that the destruction of the Alpha Quadrant's Rapid Transit Network led to much of the Andromedan fleet being tracked down and destroyed, preventing the Andromedans from easily operating in the Alpha Quadrant and cutting them off from local resources. Fears remain of their base of operations in the Lesser Magellenic Cloud, but current 24th century technology has been deemed capable of dealing with a renewed Andromedan threat.

Source Material:

The Kelvan Empire - Star Trek: The Original Series
Amarillo Design Bureau - Star Fleet Battles: The name Andromedan Invader, Displacement Device, and Rapid Transit Network all come from this source.

Special Andromedan Rules

Power Absorbers

The Andromedan Invaders use an advanced form of the energy dampener, which has only been developed by the Andorians in this galaxy. In their home galaxy, the Andromedans were looking for ways to improve the survivability of their ships against shielded targets, used by their enemies, such as the Kelvans. The earliest Andromedan ships used energy dampeners, but their volatility to a lucky hit and the increasing power of shields on their opponents required further enhancements. The result was the power absorber panel, which the Andromedans utilize to this day in both their home galaxy and within the Milky Way.

The power absorber panels are actually groups of miniature energy dampeners working in concert. While still potentially volatile, there are several advantages of power absorbers over energy dampeners and shields. First, power absorbers are capable of protecting a ship from tremendous amounts of damage and often have more instantaneous stopping power than shields or dampeners. Secondly, the panels are capable of defending an entire hemisphere of the ship and explain the Andromedan's characteristic circular shaped ships. Generally, the forward half of the ship is protected from power absorbers on the forward and side sections of the ship, which have the 'tendrils' facing the top of the page. The aft half of the ship is protected by power absorbers located predominantly in the aft section and a few in the side sections. These have the 'tendrils' facing the bottom of the page. Third, 10% of the total power stored in all power absorbers on the entire ship may be transferred to the batteries to provide the Andromedan with additional power later. Lastly, power absorbers are less likely to create a cascade effect that can potentially destroy the ship, unless many power absorbers are destroyed or are full of power.

Functionally, the power absorbers work by having each tendril attached to a miniature diffuser. When damage hits an Andromedan ship, it is immediately allocated to either the forward or aft facing power absorbers, depending upon where the damage came from. This is done immediately and no roll for



location is made. Only when the power absorbers are completely filled are damage locations rolled for the remaining damage. Each miniature diffuser, represented with a small circle can radiate 2 damage points into space each turn, causing power absorbers to regenerate much faster than energy dampeners.

Power absorbers have an additional advantage over the older energy dampeners. When a power absorber is destroyed, all the power stored in that 'tendrill' only is released. This reduces the risk of catastrophic damage to the ship due to a lucky hit. The released energy is dealt with as follows

- 1: Absorbed in the same facing power absorbers until those are filled
- 2: Absorbed into non-facing power absorbers until those are filled
- 3: Directed to the ship's batteries until those are full
- 4: Applied as a standard mode attack against the side the power absorber is attached

Andromedan Batteries

Andromedans utilize special batteries, which tie into their Power Absorber Panels and power grid. Each box of battery on an Andromedan ship may hold up to two points of power. Andromedans always start the game with full power in their batteries, unless the Andromedan player elects to do otherwise. This power can be used for any function, such as powering transporters for Satellite Ship operations or Tactical T-bombs, increased sensor power, increased thrust, or increased Gravitic Focuser shots. To recharge the batteries, the Andromedan must deactivate systems and/or draw power from the Power Absorber Panels, as described in the Power Absorber Panel section.

Satellite Ship Deployment

All Andromedan Motherships are required to have their hangers configured to carry a particularly sized Satellite Ship. For example, the Intruder can carry 4 Vipers, or 3 Cobras, or 2 Mambas. Generally, this hanger configuration is only important for campaign purposes. If a Mothership is configured to carry two large Satellite Ships (ie: Mambas), it could not carry three Cobras or four Vipers unless the hanger was reconfigured to carry that sized Satellite Ship. However, if an Intruder is configured to carry two large Satellite Ships, it could still carry two medium or small Satellite Ships.

Satellite Ship Operations

The Andromedans utilize a unique Mothership / Satellite Ship fleet organization, which requires several clarifications as to how they operate in the Babylon 5 Wars setting. First, Andromedan Satellite Ships are carried internally by the Motherships and do not launch via a hatch. In fact, Andromedan hangers have no openings to space, requiring the Satellite Ships to be launched by other means. Satellite Ships may start the game either deployed or in the Mothership's hanger at the Andromedan's choice.

Launch Requirements and Restrictions: The Andromedan player has two options for launching a Satellite Ship. The most common is to use a transporter, but a Displacement Device may also be used. In order for a transporter to be used, it must be powered with four points of energy. This is not automatically supplied. This must come from deactivating systems or from Andromedan batteries. In addition, the Mothership is responsible for the power cost. The Mothership can only launch as many Satellite Ships as it has transporters, unless Displacement Devices are used. The Mothership may use its Displacement Devices to launch a Satellite Ship, and if done, is automatically successful. However, the Satellite Ship does not gain the +13 to its Initiative, but does receive the -4 Fire Control. In rare cases, a Satellite Ship may be equipped with its own Displacement Device and, if so, may launch itself and follows the above step as if it was launched by the Mothership's Displacement Device.

The declaration for launch (whether by transporter or Displacement Device) comes during the Ship Power Adjustments step in the sequence of play. Once announced, the Satellite Ship is placed on the board at the owning players option, within the range of the transporter or Displacement Device. The Satellite Ship operates normally from this point with the following restrictions:

1. The Satellite Ship must spend the entire turn at speed 5 or less
2. The Satellite Ship suffers a -10 to its Initiative for this turn
3. The Satellite Ship suffers a -4 to its Fire Control for this turn

Recovery Requirements and Restrictions: The Andromedan player may only recover Satellite Ships by transporter, as the Displacement Device is not accurate

enough to target the Mothership's hanger. Again, the cost is four points. The Satellite Ship is recovered during the Ship Power Adjustments step in the sequence of play of the turn in which all recovery restrictions are fulfilled.

1. The Satellite Ship must spend one turn on the map, not counting the turn of launch
2. The Satellite Ship must spend a full turn at a speed of 5 or less before being recovered

Satellite Ship Operation Example: An Andromedan fleet consists of an Intruder Mothership and two Mamba Heavy Destroyers. The Andromedan player chooses to have Mamba 1 deployed at the start, speed 8, while Mamba 2 begins the game in the Intruder's hanger. Since the Intruder is a capital ship, it has five transporters (one per section) for transporter operations. On turn 1 nothing changes as Mamba 1 remains on the map and Mamba 2 remains aboard the Intruder. The enemy is seen launching fighters at the Andromedan. During the Power Adjustments step of Turn 2, the Andromedan elects to use four battery points to power one transporter and launch Mamba 2. The Andromedan elects to save its Displacement Device for the future. Mamba 2 will move normally and use EW normally during Turn 2, but will have a maximum speed of 5, a -10 initiative penalty, and a -4 fire control penalty. By Turn 3, the enemy fleet fires at the Intruder, and, with some lucky rolls, destroys the Intruder's forward section. Seeing this, and having poor return fire, the Andromedan player chooses to withdraw. On Turn 4, both Mambas decelerate to speed 5 and maneuver to remain within a number of hexes of the Intruder equal to twice its Sensor rating (ie: the range of the transporters). Enemy fighters, shooting through the downed Intruder's Power Absorber Panels, destroy the Port Structure. On Turn 5, the Mambas are eligible for recovery as both have spent the previous turn at a speed of 5 or less and have been on the map for more than 1 turn since launch. In addition, the Intruder still has three structure sections and thus three transporters, but only the Starboard battery is intact and only has six power. In order to achieve two more points of power, the Intruder deactivates Gravitic Focuser #8, so that both Mambas can be recovered. This recover occurs during the Ship Power Adjustments segment of Turn 5. For the rest of the turn, only the Intruder moves on the map.

Andromedan Thrusters

Andromedans are well known for their ability to generate incredible amounts of thrust from their batteries. In order to fully utilize this ability, all Andromedan ships are equipped with oversized thrusters. These thrusters, combined, can handle approximately 50% more thrust than the engine's basic output before requiring the Andromedan to suffer from over-thrust criticals.

Andromedan Weapons

Tractor-Repulsor Beams

The main Andromedan heavy weapon is the tractor-repulsor beam. This system, using advanced tractor technology locks on to a target and alternates between attracting and repelling the target, which creates extreme stress and shear on the target to cause damage. There are two versions used by the Andromedans. The first, only deployed on Motherships and bases, is the Heavy Tractor-Repulsor. This weapon is characterized by a long range, decent fire control, and moderate rate of fire. The second, only used on Satellite Ships and a few rare Mothership variants, is the Light Tractor-Repulsor, which is characterized by a faster rate of fire, but shorter range than its heavier cousin.

Gravitic Focuser

The Gravitic Focuser is the primary secondary weapon of the Andromedan fleet. Its best quality is its range and rate of fire. It is also capable of increasing its damage output, depending upon how much extra power is put into the system. Combined with the large Andromedan batteries, Gravitic Focusers can be very devastating in the opening salvos of an engagement. Generally, the Gravitic Focuser is characterized by wide firing arcs, but relatively low deployment numbers.

Tactical Transporter Bombs

This is another unique Andromedan system, developed in part with the abilities that Power Absorber Panels offer. Since Power Absorber Panels do not affect the use of transporters out of the operating ship, the Andromedans utilized tactical t-bombs as a means of defending their ships from small attack ships, or as a supplement to their standard weapons. Tactical T-bombs

are utilized during the Combat Step of the Sequence of Play and fire along with other weapons at the Andromedan's target of choice. However, they target a particular hex and roll against a base to hit of 20 with a maximum range of the firing ship's Sensor rating.

(Optional Rule) Tactical T-bombs benefit from the firing ship's OEW. It is important to note, that since transporters are used, the power to fire a Tactical T-bomb must come from deactivating other ship systems or from the ship's batteries. While these are flash weapons, Tactical T-bombs only affect the unit they are targetted on. However, fighter flights are treated as "single units". While a Tactical T-bomb can only engage one flight, it can potentially wipe out an entire flight. This, combined with several Satellite Ships, provide the Andromedans with a solid small craft defense.

(Optional Rule) Tactical T-bombs only target a single unit. If the unit is a ship, use the optional rule above. If it is a fighter flight, perform damage allocation as follows. Apply damage from the Tactical T-bomb to one fighter in the flight (owner's choice). If the first fighter is destroyed, the owner of the flight chooses another fighter to take the remaining damage. This continues until no fighters or damage is left to allocate. This effect represents the small size of the Tactical T-bomb and the tight formations flown by fighter flights.

Ships of the Andromedan Invaders

The Andromedan Fleet can be divided into two different categories. The first, and most recognized, are the Andromedan Motherships. These large craft provide the strategic movement abilities through the use of their Displacement Devices. The Andromedan Motherships, depending on their size, are capable of carrying, internally, a varying number of smaller Satellite Ships, which are treated by the Andromedans in all respects as expendable attrition units. These smaller ships are tasked with nearly any mission, from escorting the Mothership to performing attack runs on key enemy units. The Motherships are also capable of performing repairs and maintenance on the Satellite Ships, which are little more than warp engines with engines. During the Invasion years, the Andromedans utilized several classes of Motherships, complete with variants, and upgraded their Satellite Ships in service. While current

records and analyses indicate that the Invasion was ended around 2300 and that no new ship classes were seen after this time, it is not possible to fully conclude that newer, more lethal Andromedan ships are deployed. If so, they have not been seen in operation in this sector of the Milky Way.

Motherships

Intruder Heavy Cruiser

Typically, the image of this ship is the one most conjured when one mentions the Andromedans. These were some of the first ships to enter the Milky Way Galaxy in search of the Kelvans. The Intruder boasts several impressive capabilities, namely its large Power Absorber array and an auxiliary tractor to tow damaged Satellite Ships out of harm's way. This ship is capable of extended missions and, with its Satellite Ships, can engage small squadrons of Alpha Quadrant ships. These ships made up the core of heavy Andromedan units used in this galaxy and were in the second wave of Andromedans who arrived in this galaxy in the early 23rd century (ie: before major combat operations). A pair of these cruisers were more than capable of subduing moderate orbital defenses and planetary ground forces, especially with the addition of any Satellite Ship troop ships.

Infestor Heavy Scout (Unique Intruder Variant)

Only three Infestors are known to have operated within the Milky Way Galaxy. These ships lose all of their tractor-repulsors, but gain ELINT abilities to improve the search for the Kelvans. While the ship itself is not as combat capable as its better known cousin, it carries twice the Satellite Ship compliment and can be a formidable opponent. The Infestor also served in another important secondary role, once the Kelvans were discovered in the Milky Way. Their large hangers were utilized to carry Satellite Bases and other components to rapidly establish Rapid Transit Network Nodes throughout the Alpha Quadrant. While other Motherships are capable of deploying Satellite Bases, only Infestors, or the rare Dominator Dreadnoughts, could assemble the larger bases in one trip.

Conquistador Light Cruiser

These were the smallest Motherships operated by the Andromedans. While less capable than an

Intruder, these ships, along with a single Satellite Ship, operated as fast raiders or in hit-and-run attacks. These ships, with their consort, were more than capable of handling lone enemy cruisers and were a terror to the shipping lanes during the peak of Andromedan power. Conquistadors and their variants were among the first Motherships operating in the Milky Way and helped pave the way for the development of the Rapid Transit Network by Infestors and Missionaries.

Missionary Explorer **(Rare Conquistador Variant Limited Availability - 33%)**

Considering the nature of the Andromedan's mission in our galaxy, it is not surprising to know that nearly every ship class operated by the Andromedans has a corresponding scout version. The Missionary follows a similar mission profile as the Infestor, but was generally used as the standard exploration ship of the Andromedan fleet and was considered more expendable. The Missionary also boasts a hanger as large as an Intruder's and often carried scout Satellite Ships, such as the Anaconda, to assist in searching systems for the Kelvan Remnant. The Missionary also served as a Satellite Ship conveyer and base builder for Rapid Transit Nodes and these ships were primarily responsible for the construction of the Rapid Transit Network between the Lesser Magellenic Cloud and the Milky Way. To aid in these missions, the Missionary includes a small tractor beam, which is missing in the original Conquistador design.

Satellite Ships

Mamba Heavy Destroyer **(Large Satellite Ship)**

These were the largest Satellite Ships operated by the Andromedans and were the size of small MCVs. Mambas were deployed after the smaller Cobra and Viper Satellite Ships proved too small against the better organized Andromedan opponents. Because of their size, Motherships could not carry many Mambas. With their impressive Power Absorber array, trio of tractor-repulsors, and incredible maneuverability, pairs of Mambas could easily destroy enemy cruisers and support ships. While the superior Satellite Ship in almost any situation, many Andromedan Motherships were seen operating the smaller Cobra, well into the 24th century. It is conjectured that the Andromedans simply could not

build enough Mambas to fully replace the Cobra, or that some Andromedans preferred more numerous, smaller hulls over a few, more survivable larger hulls.

Python Heavy Destroyer **(Rare Mamba)**

The Python represents one of the most unusual ships in the Andromedan order of battle. They appeared in the Milky Way at roughly the same time as the Mamba Heavy Destroyer. What makes them so different is that they are one of the few Satellite Ships deployed in any numbers, that were equipped with their own Displacement Device by sacrificing a third of its gravitic focuser and tractor-repulsor armament. The result is a Satellite Ship capable of movement, independent of a Mothership, along the Rapid Transit Network. These ships were used as a leader variant among Mambas or other Satellite Ships when operating from a Mothership or on independent patrols away from a Mothership, where its Displacement Device could be used to great effect. Alternatively, the Python was utilized as a light raider; a roll it excelled in. In this roll, the Python would use the Rapid Transit Network to rapidly enter a region, rampage through a convoy, and leave before confronted. Pythons were more than adequate at dealing with the occasional frigate defending a convoy or mining installation and have even been known to engage some light cruisers.

Anaconda Scout **(Rare Mamba)**

Much like the Python, the Anaconda mounts a Displacement Device to facilitate independent scouting missions, which did not require a Mothership. This ability is unique to the Anaconda when compared to the other Andromedan Satellite Ship scouts. In addition, the Anaconda provides ELINT support to Andromedan fleets aboard a durable Satellite Ship hull. This allows for more combat oriented Motherships in a battle.

Cobra Destroyer **(Medium Satellite Ship)**

The Cobra comprised of more than half of all Satellite Ships in the Andromedan arsenal and quickly replaced the smaller Viper upon the Andromedan's initiation of major operations in this section of the Milky Way. The Cobra was considered superior in all aspects versus the Viper and was developed in response to the heavier resistance among the races in the Alpha

Quadrant. It is suspected that the Cobra design was brought by the Andromedans from their home galaxy and was put into production in the Lesser Magellanic Cloud when the Viper proved to be too small for the Andromedan's needs in this galaxy. Cobras were almost never seen operating far from a Mothership or alone, but were known to be used as patrol ships for in-system security.

Viper Frigate (Small Satellite Ship)

The smallest of all the Andromedan Satellite Ships, the Viper was predominantly seen in the early stages of the Andromedan Invasion. The Andromedans quickly upgraded their Satellite Ships to Cobras when it was found that Vipers were too fragile for use in this galaxy. Almost overnight, all Vipers were placed into garrison, system patrol, or base defense duty. As the Rapid Transit Network began to erode, Vipers began making an appearance again in the Andromedan order of battle as replacement Cobras and Mambas were difficult to come by. This led to the Motherships using whatever Satellite Ships were available. The down side to this was that most Motherships at this time were configured to carry Cobras or Mambas, and could only fit a number of Vipers in their hangars equal to the number specified by the size Satellite Ship the Vipers were replacing.



Converting the Invaders

After playing Star Fleet Battles for many years, I have found the Andromedans to be one of the most interesting and unique groups in this game setting. The Andromedans are radically different in both technology and tactics, which greatly lends to my interest in this group. However, it was not until I saw Tyrel's Star Trek conversions that the idea for an Andromedan conversion to Babylon 5 Wars began to grow. I would like to present some of my thoughts and rationale in what I did to bring the Invaders to Babylon 5. Overall, I hope you enjoy the Andromedans as much as I have enjoyed re-inventing them. The Invaders are, of course, a work in progress, but with a lot of help from Tyrel and my brother Jeremy, I hope will be a lot of fun.

The Background

The first hurdle was to come up with a convincing background for the Andromedans. The existing Star Fleet Battles story was interesting, but would not mesh well with the established Star Trek "history" that Tyrel has followed for his conversions. This left the option of simply creating the Andromedans without any inclusion into Star Trek. Another option was to present the Andromedans as an alternative timeline in Star Trek. While this made the possibilities limitless, it did not sit too well with me. The solution was brought about by Tyrel directing me to the Memory Alpha Star Trek Wiki website. Here, a race called the Kelvans, introduced in only a single episode in the original series ("By Any Other Name"), spoke of their flight from their home galaxy, Andromeda, due to increasing radiation levels. The few snippets of information here provided a link to create the Andromedans and explain why they would travel all the way to the Milky Way galaxy. For me, the over riding goal was to somehow incorporate the Andromedans into the existing "history". I did keep some of the original Star Fleet Battles background, especially concerning just what the Andromedans are. Apparently, their true form is subject to debate.

Invader Technology

Discussing the ships of the Andromedan Invaders also involves a discussion of some of their technologies. In most cases, I used Star Fleet Battles as my guide, as the Andromedans are not part of the official Star Trek cannon. The Andromedans were known for their lack of deflector shield technology and for their substandard strategic warp speeds. This resulted in

the Andromedans developing several unique technologies. The first is the Power Absorber Panel. Veterans of Star Fleet Battles will recognize that the PA Panels are almost a direct conversion, in terms of their operation and utility. This was intentional as I wanted the Andromedans to have a completely different feel than the other Star Trek races. While parallels can be made to Shadow Diffuser technology, the PA Panel is more akin to a highly advanced Energy Dampener system, originally used by the Andorians in Tyrel's conversions. The panels allow any Andromedan ship to stop a phenomenal amount of destructive power before suffering permanent damage. This I countered with the Andromedans smaller structure, especially among the Satellite Ships, and lower armor values. In SFB, the Andromedans could shrug off several solid hits, but once their panels were compromised, they could be quickly dispatched. This does make Andromedan LCVs some of the nastiest in the game.

The Displacement Device was a technology that I could not ignore. The problem was figuring out how to use it. In SFB, the Andromedans could literally "hop" about the board with this device. I originally considered this option, but I felt that it did not fit the existing Babylon 5 game. I then hit upon the idea of the Displacement Device conveying a massive initiative bonus (or penalty) to whomever the Andromedan targeted. This allowed the same basic function without a complicated rules set on how to move the target. Now, if used on an Andromedan and successful, the device allowed the targeted ship to more often than not, get the jump on its intended victim. In addition, the initiative penalty if used on an enemy, demonstrates the confusion brought about by the device affecting its target. In any case, the Displacement Device creates a fire control penalty to represent the fact that it is literally causing the targeted ship to "jump" through space.

The biggest problem was when to allow this to work. Rolling for a successful hit on one turn and having the effects felt during the next turn (ala Com Disruptor) did not feel right. This is why I chose to allow the Displacement Device to "fire" in the Initial Action Step. It is announced before initiative determination and used after EW allocation and its effects are for that turn only. I felt that this best reflected the disruptive nature of the device in combat. While a little unusual, since it is somewhat outside the normal sequence of play, I felt that it was the most realistic portrayal.

Finally, I come to the ships. The Motherships are the heavy weapons platforms of the Invader fleet. While they carry their Satellite Ships internally, they are

not massive ships. This is due to the extremely small size of the Satellite Ships, most of which are LCVs. As a result, the Andromedan Motherships, while powerful, are not as heavily armed as much of their space is dedicated to hanger and power absorbers. The Satellite Ships, except for the large Mamba class, are LCVs. They are little more than engines with guns. While their defenses are formidable, due to the power absorbers, they are incredibly fragile, with the small Viper only containing 15 structure. I have designed the Satellite Ships to reflect their expendability. They are designed to fly straight into harm's way and deflect any attack on the Mothership. The decision to give the Satellite Ships both forward and aft PA Panels was difficult. Initially, I felt that the best way to balance the little ships was to use a single 360 degree panel bank, but this did not feel right. I kept the two panel design as a counter balance to the incredibly small structure blocks to fully represent the Satellite Ships' armored eggshell appearance. Despite their panels, all Andromedan ships are extremely vulnerable to rapid fire weapons.

Another Andromedan characteristic I wanted to keep was their incredible maneuverability, which is directly related to their copious battery power in SFB. I gave the Andromedans large batteries to reflect their ability to route power to weapons, transporters, sensors, or engines. Again, I followed the SFB example, as the Andromedans are quite capable of delivering a powerful opening salvo with their extra power, but once it is used, the ship must deactivate nearly every system to recharge the batteries in one turn. This gives the Andromedans their classic SFB tempo of attack and regroup. Initially, I felt that the batteries held too much power with two power per box. However, with all of the options the Andromedans have with their power, it cannot be used for everything and is a finite quantity. In several of the Andromedan playtests, the misuse of battery power has definitely hurt the Andromedan player. With this power comes the ability to gain more thrust. As I said earlier, the Andromedans are notorious for their feats of maneuver in SFB. To translate this into Babylon 5 Wars, the Andromedans use oversized thrusters. This allows them to buy extra thrust and use it, to a degree, before they run the risk of creating criticals.

The Weapons

The Andromedans were not the most inspired race when it came to weapons in SFB. However, a direct conversion to Babylon 5 was not the proper route. Tyrel's Star Trek ships have a longer range than their

SFB counterparts and I had to adjust the Andromedans to figuratively fit the curve. As a result, the Tractor Repulsors have fairly good range penalties, but are still much shorter ranged than equivalent photon torpedoes. I designed the Tractor Repulsors to be a straight up design. They are simply the standard heavy weapons of the fleet and provide the long ranged punch. The light version has a shorter range and is on par with the phaser-equivalent system the Andromedans use, much like in SFB.

The phaser-equivalent proved troublesome. The Andromedans used a system that was not as good as the Federation's phaser. In Tyrel's conversions, this is the Medium Phaser. I had to come up with a system which was effective, yet did not surpass the medium phaser. The Gravitic Focuser was the result. It has a similar range to the Medium Phaser and a lower fire control, and is actually almost identical when the Medium Phaser fires every turn. I also needed an excuse for the Andromedans to be drawing power out of their batteries so that it was not just used in sensors or engines. This is why the Gravitic Focuser can be overcharged and fired every turn. It does not take many overcharged shots before the batteries are drained. The problem was that when overcharged, the Gravitic Focuser was more effective than the Medium Phaser. This situation was solved by decreasing the number of Gravitic Focusers on Andromedan ships and by the limited battery power. Again, the Andromedans have a powerful, first strike ability, but cannot repeat it unless they pull away and recharge their batteries and clear their PA Panels.

Another system I really wanted were transporter bombs. The Andromedans are almost singularly unique in having transporters, but also having a defense system (PA Panels), which allows transporter operations without the need to deactivate the defenses. This allows the Andromedans to perform several nasty tricks in SFB that I wanted to convey to Babylon 5 Wars. The most prominent was the use of t-bombs for defense against small attack craft (ie: fighters) or to be used as a general mayhem weapon. The tactical t-bomb developed when I decided that the current t-bombs in the Star Trek rules were too powerful for a ship that was not penalized for using them. The tactical t-bomb rules are the compromise which give the Andromedans a useful system, but one that cannot kill ships across the map.

* * *

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The Antareans & Lumati



Flarn and Philosophy: The Antareans & Lumati

By Peter Beitzell & Steve Lafolette

The Antareans

The species known as the Antareans are an oddity in the galaxy, they are former subjects who get along with their former masters, the Centauri. How this came about is an interesting story. They were discovered by the Centauri in 1650. At the time the Centauri Republic was suffering an economic depression and in an effort to alleviate it, they were expanding into new areas of opportunity.

House Mollari in particular was having problems and was searching for additional markets and resources. Captin Nellar of the Mollari Fleet believed that an inhabited planet might better serve them as a market for goods rather than as a source for slave labor. As a result he initiated peaceful contact with the Antareans whose tech level at the time was roughly early industrial. The open and friendly nature of the Antareans in response to the visitors from the stars helped to secure a higher level of trust in the natives on the part of the Centauri. The Antarean demand for new technologies was paid through the processed resources of their world, payment which greatly added to the wealth of House Mollari.

After 125 years of loyal service to the Republic, Antareans were permitted to apply for work in Centauri naval yards and other facilities. The Antarean physiology made them adept at zero-g operations, and soon their services were highly sought after, resulting in their induction as a regular part of the workforce throughout the Republic. Despite the favor they gained with their skill and dedication, they Antareans could never rise above middle-management positions on the social ladder. The Centauri also refused them the right to construction their own military capabilities.

All of this changed during the war with the Orieni. The massive casualties suffered in both personnel and warships made it impossible for the Centauri to ignore the natural abilities of the Antareans. At first they were drafted as damage control teams, which allowed more Centauri to operate as combat personnel but even that was not sufficient help. When the Orieni attacked Quadrant 12 in 2004 the Antareans requested permission to convert warships under construction within their space to Antarean specifications, a request which was eventually granted. The Antareans feared that as loyal citizens of the republic they would suffer orbital bombardment if they were cut-off by the Orieni from the rest of the Republic. The impending loss of Quadrant 17 would accomplish just that.

Whatcha Talkin Bout, Antarean?

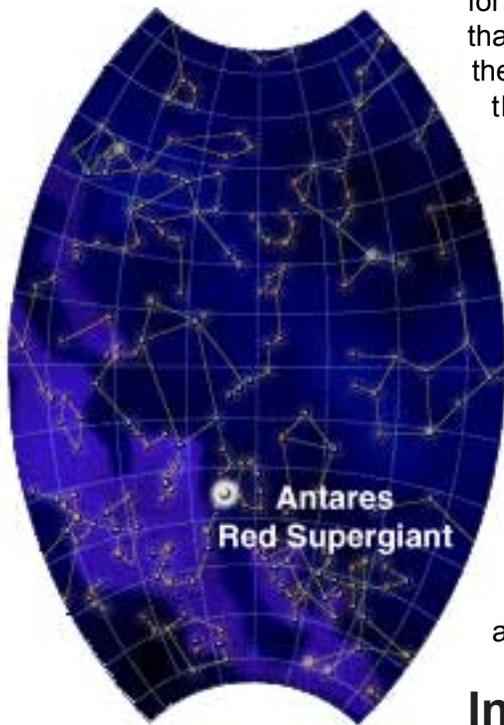
By Tyrel Lohr

So what do we really know about the Antareans? Not much. The picture above is not even necessarily the Antareans, it is just the picture that the Voltayre's Encyclopedia Xenobiologica ascribed to them so many years ago. So we don't even know what they look like.

What we *do* know about the Antareans is in relation to a few throwaway pieces of dialogue in the first season of the show. Changeling nets, like that used by the rogue Minbari in "The Gathering", are produced in the Antares sector, which presumably is located in or near Antarean space. The other mention of the Antareans appears in "The Parliament of Dreams" when Catherine Sakai comes to Sinclair's quarters to celebrate a commission, Antarean flarn in hand.

After the first season, the Antareans are never mentioned again. And, since they were never seen to begin with, the true nature of the Antareans is up in the air. We can largely accept the physical proximity of their territories to the Centauri Republic, since the Mongoose RPG books maintained this fact in their own series of books.

* * *



A combination of desperation and natural ability turned the Antareans into formidable fighters. Primarily using Jenas Frigates, intermixed with a handful of Optine Battlecruiser, the Antareans fought long and hard. As losses among the Frigate forces began to mount to unacceptable levels, the Antareans helped convince commanders within the Republican Fleet to refit ships with the newer assault lasers. The specifications for a laser-armed Jenas frigate were submitted. As the war progressed the longer range and the rapid-fire capabilities of the Assault Laser made a considerable impression on the Antareans.

After the war they were allowed to continue producing policing vessels, and to crew them. As the Centauri civil war began the Antareans both attempted to remain neutral and to prepare themselves for independence from the Republic. When House Kasto placed Admiral Liare on the throne as Emperor, the Antareans submitted their request

for full independence. They believed that by negotiating for their freedom they could make better gains than through a potential disastrous declaration through force. In the end they were moderately successful, ending up with two of the three systems they had asked for. The Centauri retained Polgrath for its extensive fortifications. Because their separation from the Republic was conducted on relatively good terms, their relationship with the Centauri is still strong and trade is extensive between the Republic and their Antarean allies.

Interstellar Relations

The Antarean Republic is an official ally to the Centauri and they have pledged their co-operation in a mutual defense pack, meaning they will come to the aid of their allies should they be attacked. They aided the Centauri during the War of Retribution and were rewarded with the capture of several Narn warships. They were very impressed by the capabilities of the Thentus Frigate and are working on a design inspired by its qualities. Despite their admiration for Narn military technology, they have not become endeared to the Regime's cause as a whole.

The Lumati, close neighbours to the Antareans, have maintained their freedom by superior tech for centuries and continued this tradition after the decline of the Republic. Once the Antareans became free there was friction over the status of two systems: Selchat and Ildra. These two star systems saw several battles for their control,

but have since been agreed upon as a de-militarized zone between the two powers.

The Antareans also border the Golians, another three-system power who like the Antareans were once Centauri subjects. Though there has in the past been heavy fighting between the Golians and Antareans as to the nature of their mutual border, its lines have since become well established. In order to gain access to the many of the larger powers and the League of Non-Aligned Worlds, the Golians must move through Antarean space. The Antareans in turn levied heavy tolls for Golian shipping using their local jump gates. But several years later, the Golians were no longer willing to participate in this arrangement and as a result launched a surprise attack into Antarean space. The unexpected assault nearly won the war before it was started, the Antarean naval forces were only hanging on by the skin of their teeth. They found themselves forced to ask the Centauri for help, which was duly rendered to them. With the combined might of the Centauri reinforcements and their own fleet they destroyed the jump beacon linking Antares to the Golian world of Horuna.

This created a military bottleneck, as it left only one stable route for the Golians to attack or defend. With the additional time to gather their forces, the Antarean/Centauri fleets launched a large strike through the jump lane. After bashing through the Golian defenses at the gate, the fleet regrouped and scouted the primary colony. The defenses at the planet were well established, and so the Centauri commander suggested the Antareans began peace talks. Concerned about the state of their economy and the potential for

invasion by the Lumati, the Antareans agreed and a cease fire was negotiated. The peace was negotiated in 2097, and since then there have been several border skirmishes in Selchat, a system which all three races border.

Antarean Government

The Antareans have formed a true Republic, with each of their provinces sending three members to the Senate. Provinces are generally composed of a single continent with populations exceeding the hundreds of millions. Consequently the senate is relatively small, with only members controlling the majority of the power. Each province is further subdivided, where lieutenants to each of the Senators assist them in the more mundane tasks of governing their respective areas.

Antarean Physiology

The Antarean species is essentially an Arboreal octopus. They evolved from fresh-water swamps into amphibious creatures, and when on land developed the tendency of grabbing low-lying branches to escape predators to drop down on unsuspecting prey. As their planet dried and the climate cooled, they fully developed into land-based creatures with the ability to breath air over indefinite periods of time. The shift in environment also forced them to grow stronger and hardier. Over time they developed the use of tools and became intellectually evolved.

They have two sexes and give birth to active babies like mammals. Socially they form large, extended families all living in one

dwelling, typically within the same tree. As their native environment was amongst the trees, they create dwellings from standing trees rather than processed lumber. As a result their homes are typically a cross between a tree house and a jungle gym. The older trees used for dwelling on Antares are often forty or more meters in height and are very well cared for. Often visitors have a hard time spotting smaller communities as they are a part of the forests they are born from. The Antarean social mindset is best described as cheerful opportunism, with the mantra "If this does not work out the next chance to come along probably will." An average Antarean will live about one hundred years and due in part to their longevity they retain a significantly more patience than other individuals.

As allies of the Centauri they are mistrusted by all others, a feeling which they deeply resent, but they believe that history will ultimately prove that they have made the right decision in this matter, as the Centauri have a habit of recovering from bad situations.

Technology and Naval Capabilities

The Antareans decided that the key to naval success lay in the emphasis on range and rate of fire, as opposed to the short-range punch of the Orieni. During the Cenauti-Orieni war, the Antareans pushed for the deployment of the Assault Laser, but though they endorse its capabilities the Antarean military found it too expensive to be viable as a primary armament within their own fleet. Instead they concentrated their efforts on the less expensive and more robust particle weaponry, eventually producing the Improved

Particle Beam which enjoys increased damage and triple the range of its predecessor.

The second result of their research was the Dual Particle Beam. Modeled on the Centauri Twin Array, the weapon is a larger mount that incorporates a pair of commonplace Particle Beams into one mount.

Because of their nature both weapons can be afforded wide arcs, and some mutual components helps to simplify maintenance and reduce operating costs. A limited contract with the Centauri has also led to the procurement of several Guardian Arrays, but the devices are expensive and the Centauri are as of yet unwilling to sell them in bulk or provide the capabilities to build them. The Assault Laser is not a common weapon in their navy but is seen on captured Thentus's, replacing the Narn-built Medium Lasers. Antarean drive material tech is improving but still tends to be about twenty-five years behind the latest Centauri innovations.

Antarean Warships

Altra Heavy Combat Vessel

The first ship the Antareans designed and constructed was the Altra, an HCV. The design is sturdy and well armed but has a limited operating range and has relatively poor maneuvering abilities. It's very cheap for its size and armament.

Altara Medium Combat Vessel

The medium-sized Altara was produced next and came on line just before the outbreak of the war with the Golians. The vessel is marginal more maneuverable than

the Altra HCV and is significantly less-expensive to construct. With proportionally less crew and greater reaction-drive stores, it has better range and endurance and is often employed in patrols.

Altra Capital Ship

When the Antareans decided to make a capital ship they decided on an extremely sturdy hull, but coupled with new advances garnered in purchased Centauri technology the ship is actually more maneuverable than the Altra. The new ship was designated the Altran capital ship. It is the only ship to carry new fighter craft, carrying a total of eighteen plus two shuttles. The Altran is expensive and has thus far seen relatively modest deployment because of the slow rate at which it is being produced.

Retaliation Frigate

The Antareans were given several Thentus as spoils following the War of Retribution. The Antareans quickly gained a love of the ship's agility and laser-based weapons. Their version replaces the Medium Lasers with Assault Lasers, and supplants the Burst Beams with Guardian Arrays. They are currently attempting to reverse engineer the design, but have yet met with only limited success.

* * *



The Lumati

The Stefanlos capital ship was dates back to the 1720's and is the meanest ship in known space. The Lumati concentrated on producing a limited number of extremely tough to beat starships. The incredible strength of the Stefanlos are balanced by the fact that each one consumes a huge amount of resources to maintain.

After the last two ships of the ten ship order were completed, Lumati accountants said, "no more." So, in the 1750's, the HCV Lefanlos was designed. Faster and cheaper than the Lefanlos, twenty-five members of this class were built.

For centuries the Lumati navy remained at this level of strength, but remained a potent force. The Lumati had the best ships in the immediate neighborhood, eclipsing both the Centauri and Orieni empires. As time progressed the rest of the

galaxy caught up to the Lumati to an extent and so, after some casualties, several new designs were produced. These next-generation of warships are much more maneuverable and cheaper than the older workhorses of the fleet. The older craft still exist as a reserve and carrier force.

The Lumati fighters names were applied by their designers to act as a means of psychological intimidation. Shields were dropped from later fighters due to maintenance issues.

* * *



Scenario:

The First Battle of Hathban

A Blast from the Past: A Star Trek Scenario

By Tyrel Lohr

“Captain’s Log, stardate... err... what is the stardate? I don’t know, and my astrologer didn’t give me my horoscope today, so I have no clue. Anyway, this is Admiral Beatrix Janeway of the Federation Federation Dreadnought U.S.S. Star Empire reporting. The Star Empire is heading with the First and Thirteenth fleets on a striking mission into imperial Klingon space. We expect to meet some opposition following the loss of the Tchaikovsky in the system last month.”

Onboard the bridge of the *Star Empire*, Admiral Janeway sat and stared at her crew. She didn’t know them, nor did she like them. She would have much preferred to have a desk job back in San Francisco, but no... she lost a poker game and was sent off to lead the Federation flagship to war. At least the other admirals said that she had lost the poker game, as she was not

actually there. But why would they lie?

Perhaps the most annoying thing about her stationing on the *Star Empire* was the fact that she had to deal with a new executive officer. Some commanders liked to give their XO’s pet names, terms of endearment and friendship. And Janeway was no exception. It had taken her little time to peg her new XO: Waste of Oxygen.

Janeway looked across at the fool and winced. Why had she been stuck serving alongside Kevin Sorbo?

“Admiral, we are ready to drop out of warp in the Hathban system,” reported the helmsman.

“Good, prepare for the attack,” she replied.

The Federation fleet, comprised of a Federation Dreadnought, Enterprise Heavy Cruiser, two Miranda Light Cruisers, Northampton Cruiser, Larson Destroyer, Baker Destroyer, and Wilkerson Escort Destroyer dropped out of warp, their warp trails bleeding off like a bad acid trip.

“Report!” shouted Janeway, as if she cared.

The portly Tellarite science officer stuck his snout to the science viewer and squealed, “Many Klingon ships. Many, many Klingon ships. Oooh... some of them just cloaked!”

Janeway sighed. *I’m surrounded by imbeciles*, she thought, not understanding the irony of that statement. “I was hoping for something a little more descriptive, Lieutenant.”

“Oh, right,” the Tellarite snorted. “There appear to be two K’T’inga Battlecruisers, a single Riskadh Battlecruiser, two B’rel Birds of Prey, and three Ta’Na’Den Logistics Cruisers. Scanners indicate that the cargo holds of the Ta’Na’Dens are laden with dilithium and other rare ores as well as general supplies. It seems to be meant for the colonists on Hathban.”

“Good,” Janeway replied, a half-smile creeping across her face. “I wanted to slaughter those dirty Klingons, and now we get to deprive them of their food as well!”

Commander Sorbo interjected, “Admiral, if all of the colonists are dead, wouldn’t they not need any food?”

“Details, details, you waste...err... are wasting no time with the details. Yes, they won’t

need the food. But what of the nutrient-deficient rocks? Won't they need sustenance as well?"

Perplexed, Sorbo sat in thought, his face growing blanker than usual.

"See, you didn't think it all through," Janeway quickly replied. In an attempt to change the subject, she bellowed, "Communications, is the task force ready to proceed with the attack?"

"Yes, Admiral," replied the comm officer.

"Then let's proceed."

The Federation fleet moved forward towards the Klingon position and the planet looming beyond. One K'T'inga and both B'rels had cloaked upon detecting the Federation presence. Their position was unknown. The two Miranda Light Cruisers, *Redemption* and *Trieste*, moved ahead of the fleet at high speed to use their sensors to try and detect the cloaked ships.

No vessels were detected before the ships entered torpedo range. Both fleets exchanged torpedo fire, weakening each fleet's defenses. For the most part the Klingon torpedoes missed their mark, doing little damage in the instances that they managed to hit.

As the two fleets continued to close the damage from successive torpedo strikes became more brutal. The Klingon Riskadh was hit by several photon torpedoes and medium phasers from the fleet, including a brutal strike by the Enterprise-class *U.S.S. Tripoli*. Return fire from the Klingons heavily damaged the leading Mirandas, damaging the forward section of one and the aft section of another.

Onboard the *U.S.S. Redemption*, Captain Jonathan Archer watched events unfold on the

viewscreen. Why had the Mysterious Man from the Future brought him here to fight the Klingons? He was having a perfectly enjoyable time fighting Klingons in his own time period. Why, even Porthos was able to kill an entire battalion of fierce Klingon warriors! Archer himself had killed scores of Klingons, that is if you count running away scared as a kill. He did.

Things were looking rough. The Klingon K'T'inga had managed to devastate the forward section of the *Redemption*. The forward saucer was tattered and deflector shields down. The K'T'inga's heavy photon torpedo had collapsed their shields, and successive disruptor fire from the enemy's port batteries had cut through their hull.

If there was one thing that Archer knew it was when to fight. And Archer had every intention of fighting this day and proving to the Klingons that he was a force to be reckoned with.

"Helmsman, set a course away from the battle and run away fast!"

"Sir, shouldn't be stay and fight?" the helmsman asked quizzically.

"Absolutely not!" Archer rebutted, "If we were to stay and fight the Klingons might lose and I won't let that happen. I will never let it happen again! Never again!"

The chief medical officer, Dr. Beardy Guy, who had just happened to stop by the bridge approached Archer and took his arm. "Are you crazy, man? Do you need relieved of your command?"

Archer ripped his hand away and replied tersely, "Doctor, I appreciate your concern, but I have already relieved myself. I did that when I saw the Klingon ships, so no, I am not crazy. I am Archer!" Captain Archer struck a pose and

then looked furtively about, hoping to see a hologram.

Meanwhile the battle continued to rage. As the Klingon forces continued to close they began focusing all of their fire on the *Star Empire*. To the Federation forces it became obvious that their center of glory was going to be taken down by the Klingons no matter what, one last act of spite to make up for their own deaths.

Janeway fidgeted as she watched the Klingon ships bear down on their position. Two B'rels decloaked from aft and starboard of the *Star Empire* and began their attack run. In front of them the K'T'ingas prepared to fire.

What followed was nothing less than sheer chaos. The Tellarite had just reported that the enemy was preparing to fire when the ship bucked in all directions, seemingly as if the entire event was being filmed with a wobbly camera. Crewmen shouted and were thrown in the air, lurching in a multitude of conflicting directions.

"Shields are down on two quadrants," the helmsman reported as his panel exploded.

"Give them everything we've got!" Janeway shouted.

It was then that an explosion filled the bridge of the *Star Empire* with fire and light. The whoosh of atmosphere escaping from within the cabin could be heard for a split second before forcefields activated, protecting the crew from being sucked into the void.

In the dust and heavy smoke Commander Sorbo pulled himself out of the wreckage. His shirt was oddly ripped and he thought that his hair looked a bit longer than it had before. As he looked about the bridge he saw the Admiral... or at

least what was left of her. He ran to her, to comfort what was left of her in the time she had left.

Janeway looked up into Sorbo's eyes and said, "I hate you." Her voice growing ever weaker, Janeway forced out her dying words, "I would rather be lost in the Delta Quadrant than look at you." With that she was gone.

Sorbo jumped up and clapped his hands! *Yea, a promotion!* he thought as he pulled a force lance out of his pant's pocket and ran to the nearest turbolift.

The hit to the *Star Empire's* bridge left the ship completely out of control, drifting aimlessly towards the planet of Hathban. The rest of the fleet continued to move forward, engaging the Klingon vessels. The enemy Riskadh was disabled, its impulse engines destroyed and its shield generator disabled. One of the two enemy B'rels had also been destroyed, further weakening the Klingon forces.

The *U.S.S. Tripoli* took up the reigns of command and began ordering the remaining Federation ships into attack position. Both the *Star Empire* and *Redemption* had fallen out of formation, leaving the rest of the fleet to deal with the surviving Klingons.

It was the Northhampton *U.S.S. Thames* that scored a devastating photon strike on the lead K'T'inga, catching it just as it was coming out of cloak. Nearly the entire forward section of the cruiser was destroyed by the attack, forcing the vessel to retreat. The other K'T'inga found itself similarly crippled by a rear strike by the *Miranda Trieste*. The *Miranda* was successful in knocking out the second K'T'inga's impulse thrusters and warp engines, stranding the

already damaged cruiser in the Hathban system.

Meanwhile, as the cruisers engaged in battle, the Federation escorts leapt forward, concentrating their fire on the Klingon military freighters. The Federation fleet had hoped to capture the freighters and their valuable cargoes, but it was now obvious that, with the disaster onboard the *Star Empire*, capture was no longer an option. The Klingon freighters had proved to be a menace in their own right, adding their firepower to that of their fellows to eat even deeper into the Federation Dreadnought's hull.

"This is Captain Tyler of the *U.S.S. Tripoli* to the *Star Empire*. Please respond *Star Empire*."

"This is the *Star Empire*," now-Captain Sorbo replied as he ducked behind a bulkhead. Phaser fire shot past him, impacting on the far wall. "We are currently defending against intruders. I don't know when we will be able to regain command of the ship."

A long pause followed. Sorbo took the opportunity to dive for another bulkhead, firing willy-nilly with this force lance, miraculously striking two people with the stray shots.

When Captain Tyler replied, he was furious, "What are you talking about?! No one has beamed over to your ship to attack you, so who in the hell are you shooting at?!"

"Redshirts, Captain." The sound of someone slapping their face could be heard over the comm channel.

"You idiot, Sorbo," Captain Tyler came back, "Those are your redshirts!"

"Oh," Sorbo replied. "I just saw the redshirts and thought they must be hostile. I guess I should stop shooting them, eh?"

"That would be a good thing, Sorbo. Mark my words, if you survive this mission I will see to it that you spend the rest of your years in the brig! By the way, where is the Admiral?"

"She's dead, sir."

"Oh. Well, then I take back what I said about the brig, Commander. Good job, and keep up the good work. Kill a redshirt for me."

"Will do. Sorbo out."

As Sorbo killed redshirts on the *Star Empire*, Captain Archer continued to stare rapidly at the viewscreen. The Klingon ships were still there, and against his better judgment he had allowed his ship to move in to defend the aft section of the dreadnought.

"Sir, the surviving bird of prey has moved into our torpedo arcs," reported the tactical officer. "Permission to fire, sir?"

"Permission denied!" Archer spat back. "How can we be sure that those Klingons are hostile. For all we know they are filled with orphans and baby targs! We can't fire on them, no way, no how. We must use diplomacy, now more than ever. We can reason with them, I'm sure of it! Why else would Future Guy have brought me here if not to show you the true way of dealing with the Klingon menace?"

"It's too late to fire on them now anyway," the tactical officer replied sullenly. "The bird of prey has moved out of our arcs and has destroyed the aft section of the *Star Empire* and scored serious primary damage."

"See, there was no reason to get involved."

"Permission to shoot you, Captain?"

“Permission denied. Do I need to give you the diplomacy talk again?”

The First Battle of Hathban was nearly over. Federation forces were successful in destroying the B’rel before it could destroy the *Star Empire*. Captain Sorbo was luckily unsuccessful in eliminating the entire crew of the *Star Empire*.

With their forces defeated, the Klingon ships capable of cloaking did so and beat a retreat out of the system. That left the Klingon’s three freighters to try to make good their own escape from the system. One of the ships managed to warp out of the system successfully, but the other two were destroyed when their warp engines were destroyed while going to warp. The resultant destruction of one of these freighters caused further damage to the Federation Dreadnought *Star Empire*, which was also attempting to warp out on that turn. The destructive wave of the warp core detonation cut deep into the ship, destroying the already damaged sensors and shield generator.

The battle had been won, but at great loss. It would take months for the Federation Dreadnought to make it back to shipyards for repairs. The Klingon colony on Hathban was now destroyed, bombarded from orbit by the Federation fleet. The Klingons would return—in force—to even the score. This was something that everyone present could agree on... or at least that almost everyone present could agree on. Sorbo still claimed that the redshirts were Klingons, while Archer was sure that the whole incident was one big misunderstanding. Janeway was just glad to be dead.

Scenario Setup

Federation Forces:

1x Federation Dreadnought-Refit
1x Enterprise (Constitution-Refit) Heavy Cruiser
2x Miranda Light Cruisers
1x Northhampton Cruiser
1x Larson Destroyer
1x Baker Destroyer
1x Wilkerson Escort Destroyer

Klingon Forces:

2x K’T’inga Battlecruisers
1x Riskadh Heavy Battlecruiser
2x B’rel Birds of Prey
3x Ta’Naden Logistics Cruisers

Terrain

One hex row on the Klingon edge of the map should be designated as the surface of the planet Hathban. The next hex row out is filled with Strength 2 atmosphere.

Set Up

The Klingon player places his/her forces within 10 hexes of the surface of Hathban. The ships are prepared for the attack, so do not suffer from any below-readiness penalties. The Klingon Ta’Nadens must fulfill their warp delay before they can go to warp.

Once the Klingon player has placed his/her forces, the Federation player places his/her own forces

within three hexes of the opposite edge of the map.

Options

For a fairer fight, give the Klingons a Komo Val Battleship to match the Federation’s own dreadnought. Alternatively, trade the Ta’Naden supply ships for B’rel Birds of Prey.

Victory Conditions

The Klingons will win a minor victory if they manage to disengage two or more Ta’Naden Logistics Cruisers. They will win a major victory if they manage to destroy or force the retreat of the Federation fleet without losing all of their freighters. Any other result is considered a defeat for the Klingons.

The Federation will win a minor victory if they destroy two or more of the Klingon Ta’Nadens, so long as the Federation Dreadnought and at least two of its escorts survive the battle. They will win a major victory if they destroy or force the retreat of the Klingon fleet while also destroying two or more of the freighters.

* * *



Monsters!

It's Time for a Little Planetary Redecorating

By Tyrel Lohr

Introduction

Star Trek is well known for its use of space monsters. In The Original Series, the crew was constantly being forced into confrontations with planet destroying machines and monsters bent on wholesale slaughter. The prevalence of space monsters in Star Trek diminished as the series began taking themselves too seriously (much too seriously), but they remain a hallmark of early Star Trek, from the Doomsday Machine and giant Space Amoeba in The Original Series to the Crystalline Entity in Star Trek: The Next Generation.

Monsters

The Doomsday Machine

Encountered in 2267, the Doomsday Machine is a vessel of uncertain origin. The large device was a planet-killer, a ship whose sole purpose was to destroy worlds. The Doomsday Machine used its extremely powerful antiproton beam to break planets apart so that they could then be processed as fuel for the Doomsday Machine.

The Doomsday Machine was only lightly armed, and would have been relatively easy for the Federation to neutralize if not for the craft's pure-neutronium hull. No Federation weapon was capable of penetrating this defense.

The *U.S.S. Enterprise* was finally successful in destroying the device, but only by flying the *U.S.S. Constellation* into the maw of the beast. By detonating the *Constellation's* warp drives while inside the Doomsday Machine, it was able to bypass the ship's neutronium armor, breaking the planet-killer apart.

Re-evaluation of *Enterprise's* combat logs took place following the Borg incursion into Federation space. Many researchers believe that the Doomsday Machine was actually an anti-Borg weapon that went berserk, travelling far from its intended battlegrounds in the Delta Quadrant.

Any successful ramming attacks scored against the forward section of the Doomsday Machine score double damage against the primary section of the planet-killer.

The Space Amoeba

Starfleet defeated this gigantic single-celled organism in the 2260s after it had caused chaos in Federation territories. The nucleus of the Space Amoeba was luckily destroyed by a Federation

shuttlecraft. Little information is known about this biological impossibility, only that no giant Space Amoebas have been encountered since this incident.

In scenarios containing Space Amoebas, the Amoeba's primary form occupies a center hex and extends outwards 3 hexes in all directions. Units moving into or through any of these hexes will take damage based on their speed. Each layer of the Amoeba is assigned a modifier (see diagram) which is multiplied against the ship's speed and scored as a raking mode attack against the facing side of the ship. Fighters/shuttles take only one quarter the normal damage.

Once a ship or fighter/shuttle has entered an Amoeba hex, its speed is halved (round down) immediately. Additionally, if within an Amoeba hex, any maneuver performed by the Amoeba is repeated (at no thrust cost) by the units trapped within it. This means that any acceleration/decelerations, side slips, rolls, etc. performed by the Amoeba are also applied to ships within its area of effect.

The only ways to destroy the Space Amoeba is to either eliminate all of the Amoeba's structure or else destroy the ship's Nucleus (represented by the C&C icon). In either case, the Amoeba can be a tough foe to defeat, despite its complete and total lack of true "offensive" weaponry.

The Crystalline Entity

One of the more bizarre “monsters” encountered by Starfleet was this intelligent crystalline lifeform. The Crystalline Entity fed on biological matter, immersing a planet in its form as it scoured the planet of all life, down to the bacterial level. Several Federation colony worlds were annihilated by the Crystalline Entity before contact was finally made. The creature escaped destruction in its first encounter, but was later destroyed by a scientist whose son had died at one of the colonies struck by the Crystalline Entity. The destruction of the Crystalline Entity came only shortly after a tenuous dialogue had been established with the creature. It is not known if there are more Crystalline Entities in the galaxy, but it is likely that this creature was not unique.

The Crystalline Entity is vulnerable to gravitic and electromagnetic weaponry. They can initiate harmful harmonics in the Entity’s basic structure, ripping it apart from the inside out. Any gravitic or EM weapon that hits the Crystalline Entity scores double damage after armor.

New Rules

New Rules

Neutronium Armor

Neutronium is the densest material known and has sometimes been used by advanced powers as armor for their ships. The ability to do this is completely beyond the capabilities of most non-Ancient races.

Neutronium armor confers the following benefits:

- The armor value is subtracted from each raking sub-volley regardless of whether or not the system or structure block has already hit by another raking sub-volley from the same weapon. This applies only to weapon-based raking volleys, not raking damage scored as a result of ramming attacks.
- Weapons that score damage in standard mode treat Neutronium Armor as twice the listed amount. *Example: 21 points of standard mode damage against Neutronium Armor of 6 would subtract 12 points of damage for the armor, not the normal 6.*
- Weapons that ignore armor lose this benefit when firing on vessels with Neutronium Armor.
- Weapons with an armor-reducing component (Molecular

Flayer, Molecular Disruptor, Plasma Stream, etc.) lose this benefit when firing on vessels equipped with Neutronium Armor.

- Transporters cannot beam through Neutronium.
- Breaching Pods cannot attach to ships with Neutronium Armor.

Advanced Neutronium Armor

Advanced Neutronium Armor functions the same as standard Neutronium Armor, except that its effects are applied against Ancient-level weaponry as well as those fielded by younger races.

* * *



The Ragalthan Challenge

Results of the Escalation Wars Design Contest

By Tyrel Lohr

Introduction

Thanks to all of the readers that chose to let your voice be heard in determining the arsenal and disposition of the Ragalthan ship featured in Issue 10 of *The Great Machine*! I had a picture of what I wanted to do with the Ragalthans, but was unsure of the right path for the ships to take. As a result of the feedback, several things have been decided for the Ragalthan technological background.

I liked Greyfell's idea that the Ragalthan "ring" and drive setup was some form of advanced outgrowth if solar/plasma sail technology. It is something distinctly different than what I have given any of the other powers, and their use of such technology will be added to the Ragalthan back history. The true purpose of that "ring" is as part of the Ragalthan's hybrid gravitic drives.

Which brings us to another common submission point: the engines. The Ragalthans have extremely atrophied reaction drive systems which require large amount of fuel storage. Those projections at the rear of the ship are not spinal mounts but rather the ship's main reaction drives. Because of that, the spinal weapon idea didn't really fit this Ragalthan design, but again it was a common enough comment that I did write a spinal-weapon using ship in the background, though its

history has yet to be fully developed. This will also be the eventual home of the "shock lance" weapon that was proposed by Sakkath.

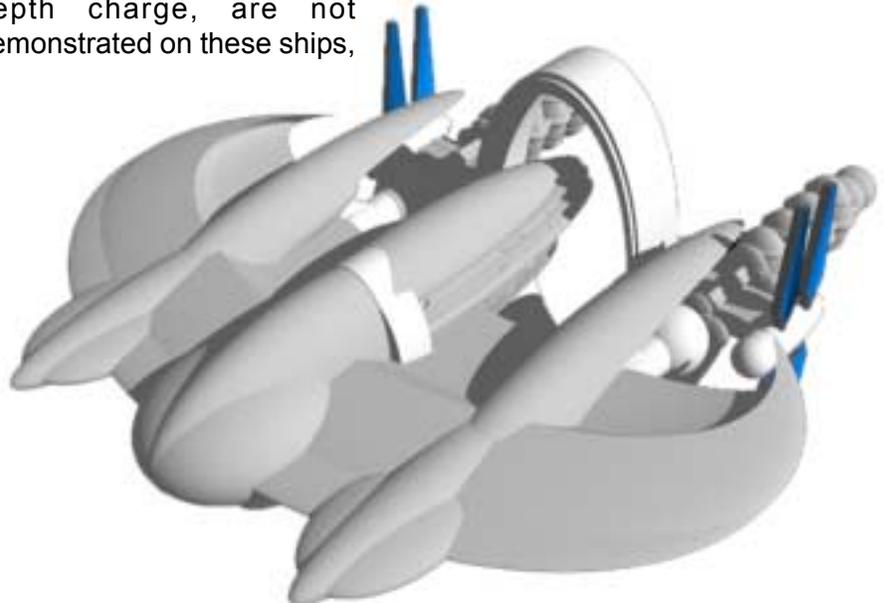
Ragalthan weapons are obviously a mish-mash of the different submissions. I wanted them to use some sort of high-tech plasma weapons, so I created the "gravitic enhanced plasma cannons" to fill that niche. I think they are a good incremental step, and fit my early thoughts on the Ragalthan weapons. The submissions had a preponderance of EM weapons, which was interesting as I also saw the Ragalthans operating some form of EM weapons. Instead of taking off-the-shelf weapons, I instead developed some new weapons to match my background fluff. Functionally very similar to the shock cannon, the new EM Pulse Beam is an interesting weapon that scores no damage against structure, but can quickly burn out enemy hull and cause power deficiencies. Some of the other EM weapon ideas, including the shock lance and EM depth charge, are not demonstrated on these ships,

but will be incorporated on future Ragalthan starships.

The "riptide torpedo" proposed by Sandworm struck my fancy, but simply did not fit the Ragalthan mentality as I saw it. However, I think the idea has a lot of merit for use in MIRV-style ballistic weapons. Look for this weapon to appear in another power's arsenal sometime in the future.

One thing that you will notice on the Ragalthan ships is a lack of much Vendirizzi weaponry. Many submitters had the idea of giving the Ragalthans older Vendirizzi equipment, but this was not going to be a good solution. The Ragalthans and Vendirizzi were both spacefaring when the Vendirizzi made contact, and the Ragalthans possessed fairly good technology in certain areas (while primitive in others). The idea to give them Novon or Courata weapons also did not work, as they had even less contact with either of those two powers.

In closing, thanks again to all those that participated in the contest!



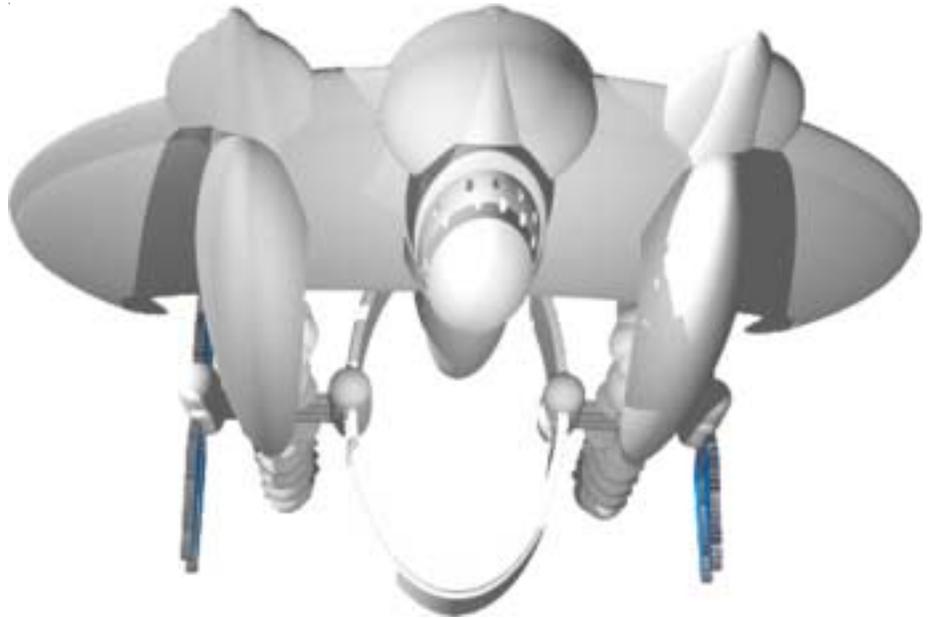
The Ragalthan Challenge

Okreah Patrol Cruiser

The late 16th Century was a time of great change for the Ragalthan Gerontocracy. Contact with more than five alien species in the previous eighty years had led to rapid social and technological development, including advancements in military hardware.

The Okreah was developed as an advanced multi-purpose cruiser intended for long-range system patrols. The intention of military designers was to field a new small warship class that could actively demonstrate the virtues of new Ragalthan weapon advances. The Okreah was selected over other competing design proposals because of its size. The ship was roughly 72% the size of the next smallest competitor, and the cost savings from a reduction of required ship construction materials would make up for a large part of the increased costs incurred by the ship's high-tech armament.

One of the more controversial decisions made by the Okreah's designers was the addition of a jump engine to the design. Military grade jump engines are quite space intensive, and many government officials believed that the addition of the engine was not appropriate to the ship's mission. This was not to mention the expense of the processed terrentium required in jump engine construction. Supporters of a jump-capable Okreah touted the strategic and tactical advantages conferred by its inclusion. Being able to jump in and out of combat would allow the



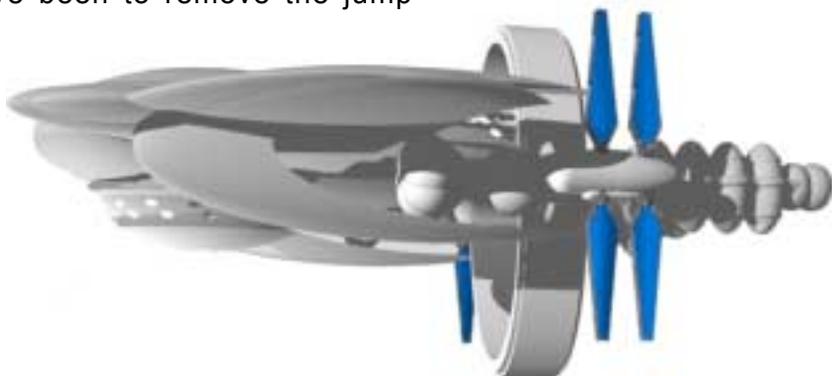
Okreah and its patrol group to choose their battles, rather than be forced to abide by the enemy's rules of engagement.

In the field, Okreah Patrol Cruisers were quite successful in their system patrol role. They possessed enough heavy firepower to take on light enemy cruisers, which encompassed all known types of heavy raider warships, while having enough light guns to counter small numbers of hostile fighters and attack boats. The only deficiency in the Okreah design was its lack of integral fighter support. The only way to correct this minor defect would have been to remove the jump

engine and strip out the hybrid gravitic drive system. This was seen as too major of a refit to seriously consider, so the idea was shelved.

Okreah cruisers served in almost every theater of the Ingalli War after the Ragalthan entrance into the conflict. The Okreahs were primarily used to lead fast-attack squadrons, often performing quick raids into Ingalli held systems in an attempt to disrupt Ingalli supply lines or gather valuable reconnaissance data.

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The Ragalthan Challenge

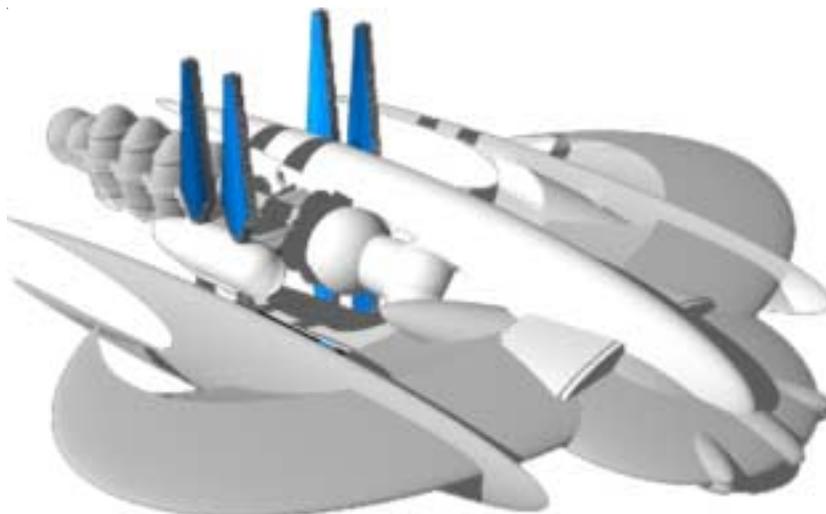


Ragalthan Fighter

This is an interesting little model I created in an attempt to capture the aesthetics of a Ragalthan fighter. The ship has a very stylized profile, resembling some sort of a ray-fish.

Ragalthan Patrol Frigate

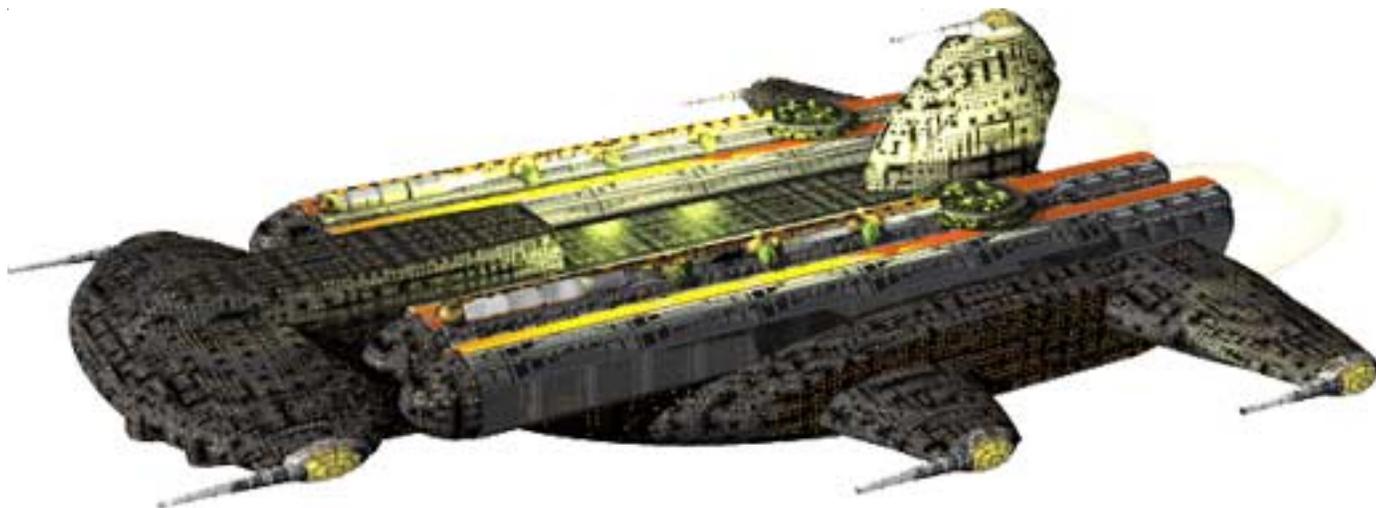
This ship was put together after the main ship to represent a smaller Ragalthan ship. The primitive engine and solar panel arrangements are maintained, but the ship is otherwise more streamlined looking.



Ragalthan "Bulk Cruiser"

A new concept hull designed following the results of the Ragalthan Challenge! This model is loosely based on Travis Watson's "Bulk Cruiser" concept. It is supposed to be a larger Ragalthan cruiser unit.

THE COURATA & VENDRIZZI



A Silhouettes in the Shadows Preview

By Tyrel Lohr

Shadows on the Wall

The road leading to the regent's palace shone white beneath the bright daylight sun. All around, Courata dignitaries moved frantically about their business. Most stood straight, erect, wearing the burnt sienna garbs that denoted rank and prestige. The air of the aristocracy filtered among these crowds like a mist, at one moment sweet and gentle while at others bitter and caustic.

Thouratar Muresoth had been born among the nobility, the son of wealthy merchants from Darso. He, too, wore the brown tunic and loincloth denoting the privilege of his birth. On his left shoulder was sewn the markings of his family: a yellow braid surrounding a blue star.

On his right was his military sash. The red silk sash was covered in geometric patterns and adorned with gleaming pips of gold, silver, and topaz. This sash demarcated Muresoth's his grade and rank in His Emperor's service. Beneath it an arm's belt circled his broad waist. A holstered gun weighed lightly on his thigh.

To passersby, he was a naval officer, Third Claw. Not high enough rank to garner special attention, but just high enough to earn any recognition at all.

If the sands of fortune had sifted differently, Muresoth might have been spared military service and the toils that it entailed. But he was the third-born son of a merchant and, as wealthy as his family was, there was only room for one inheritor to the fortune. So both Muresoth and his older brother, Tawonge, were forced to enter the military in hope of earning the favor of the other Couratan houses, earning title and power through agony and pain.

Muresoth preferred it this way, anyway. As much as he wished he could have been the first male child born to his mother, he could no

longer imagine living a life among the opulent splendor of the airy villas his family called home.

Muresoth was not at the regent's palace for a social visit. He had never in fact met the regent or any of the rest of his family. No, on this trip Muresoth was a simple courier, dispatched by the military command to deliver a highly classified message to the regent, warning him that this colony of Khannstar could be facing imminent jeopardy.

As Muresoth approached the main security checkpoint outside the palace, he stopped and withdrew an encoded security crystal from a small clasp beneath his military sash. As he strode up to the checkpoint he extended his six-fingered hand to the guards, the crystal delicately held between his clawed fingers.

A security guard snatched the crystal out of his hand and sneered. The guard returned to his station and forced the crystal into the viewing port. After a few moments the computer hissed affirmation, a series of red triangular characters crossing the bluish-black screen.

Missing Pieces

Shortly Muresoth's photo and a copy of the Imperial Seal, the Eye of the Emperor, appeared on the screen.

With a final incredulous stare, the guard removed the crystal from the viewer and returned it to Muresoth's patiently waiting palm. Muresoth quickly reattached it to its clasp, only half paying attention to the gesticulations of the security guard who was motioning for him to move through the checkpoint and on to his destination.

Muresoth pursed his lip and marched through the checkpoint, shooting one last glance at the guard. He knew the type: men of such low social status that they would never know the luxury of the highborn. Muresoth had seen the type before on other worlds and in all professions. They incorrectly believed that others were to blame for their own problems. No, their lack of ambition, drive and passion is what kept them chained to the earth while others, like Muresoth, chose to take the Great Hunt to the stars, digging their claws into adventure. In his younger years he would surely have spat upon such a waste of flesh, but no longer. His duties prevented him from such petty retaliation, as it would not reflect well upon the Imperium to have an officer of His Navy assaulting the citizenry.

Muresoth entered the palace through the main entrance, taking note of the different corridors that blossomed outward from the main atrium. Courata architecture of the colonial period, as this palace had been constructed, emphasized form over function, personifying natural orders. To Muresoth, the way that the hallways fanned out from this main, multi-tiered chamber seemed not unlike a mfolia flower. The red and white blossom of that plant grew at a sharp angle, each of its petals

overlapping one another in a strange, serrated spiral pattern.

As he walked further into the main hall he took special note of the room's beautiful vaulted ceilings. Gold and gem relief work was layered upon the walls, making the entire ceiling look like some rococo wonderland.

After stopping to ask for directions, Muresoth continued on his way. He walked up the long, smooth stone stairs to the second level of the palace and passed through several more security checkpoints. Only the first of these checkpoints requested to verify his identity. After the first of these checkpoints his identity had been registered and his location marked for constant tracking on internal security systems. Much negative can and has been said about the Courata over the years, but none would dispute the almost paranoid caution they take in regards to security.

After the final checkpoint, Muresoth found himself being escorted to the end of a long hallway by two armed military officers. At the end of the hall was a large metal door. The door looked freshly polished, the cool, silvery metal accenting the white marbled floors.

Upon reaching the end of the hall, the two escorts signaled the door to open. Muresoth didn't know just how heavy and reinforced the door really was until it began pulling apart. The door split in the middle, each side retracting back into the wall. The creak of mechanical instruments echoed down the hallway as the door pulled apart to reveal the room within.

The officers motioned for Muresoth to enter the inner sanctum. As he passed the threshold, Muresoth noted that the doors were nearly sixteen quilla deep. As soon

as all three of them had entered the room, the doors began to close.

The intricacies of the door were quickly forgotten as he found himself being led to the feet of the colonial regent himself. The regent sat upon a well-cushioned throne made of fine woods. The blood red of the cushions accented the fiery red streaks that shot through the regent's mane. At the regent's feet sat three young women, all of them nude and sitting in provocative positions upon the plush orange Couratan carpets that adorned the elevated pedestal on which the throne sat.

Muresoth approached the foot of the regent's riser and dropped down on one knee, bowing his head respectfully, as was the honored Courata custom in such matters. The regent grumbled acceptance of the gesture, and Muresoth stood back up, looking deep into the regent's eyes.

The regent returned eye contact with his yellow, unblinking stare. A scar ran down across his face, crossing one of his eyes. The fir had never grown over this old battle scar. His heavy black lips pursed, wet flesh exposing the tips of his long, white canines. His nose was heavily wrinkled, an easy betrayal of the regent's age. Muresoth could have told much of the regent's history solely from these features, but luckily he had the advantage of foreknowledge. The regent was old. His scar was earned during his mortal duel with a political rival. The regent was a man of power, a man who years ago may have even held the ear of the Emperor. Now, however, the regent was a man of waning power and waning interest. Khannstar's mines struggled to produce and its strategic position within the

Imperium had been forfeited long ago. But that was likely to change.

As if only half remembering their presence, the regent motioned with his arm and the three concubines rose and exited the room.

Only four remained in the room: Muresoth, the regent, and the two guards. The room was quiet. Never was eye contact broken between the regent and Muresoth, their battle of wills continuing. Despite his age, Muresoth still saw a warrior's fire in the old regent's eyes.

"You were sent here by the Emperor's court?" the regent asked in a deep, raspy voice.

Muresoth knew that the regent already knew the answer to the question, but played the game as it was supposed to be played, "Yes, I come as a courier and direct representative of Fleet Commander Yoroth. I have come to deliver a vital defense report that could not be risked over the military tachyon nets."

The regent shook his head, almost as if he was in on a joke that Muresoth knew nothing about. "I see, young Claw. And what information is so important that they sent a orange pultah to deliver it to me?"

Muresoth bared his teeth and snarled at the regent. The regent was trying to raise his ire, calling him a suckling cub.

Reasserting some degree of composure, Muresoth responded, "This message is contained on a crystalline data mesh sewn into the fabric of my military sash..." Muresoth paused long enough to remove the sash and throw it to the ground at the regent's feet. He resumed, "To summarize for you, Esteemed Regent of the Emperor on Khannstar, there are reports that the

new enemy may soon bring its fleet to this star system!"

The guards standing behind Muresoth gasped in horror, but no reaction was apparent on the regent's face.

"Is that all you have to report, Claw?" the regent queried in a more forceful tone of voice.

"It should be enough," Muresoth snapped. "These aliens are unlike anything we have fought before. We cannot detect their ships until they attack, and we cannot pursue them when they choose to retreat. Our forces, as well as those of our Vendrizzi allies, have been forced onto the defensive. However, Yoroth's staff – and, yes, even the Emperor himself! – have noticed that you have not enacted the imperial edicts issued by the Emperor to prepare the frontier for this great military crisis. I am to ensure your compliance with these directives, or else remove you myself."

The regent leapt to his feet and pointed a finger at Muresoth and shouted, "You would not dare to defy me?" The regent's other hand grasped at his own throat, miming a slicing motion over his two major neck arteries. A clear threat, Muresoth knew.

"I will remove you if that is your choice," Muresoth replied calmly. "Your other option is to enforce the edicts handed down by your Emperor as directed by your Emperor. If you do not comply fully with these commands, then your life is forfeit."

"Guards!," the regent bellowed, "arrest this pultah. I will not have some child assailing me with fanciful threats. I have lived far too long to succumb to such blackmail. The edicts of the Emperor have been followed here. Your claims are baseless."

Muresoth turned towards the guards and withdrew a thin-form holography projector from a concealed pocket beneath his tunic. He handed it to the nearest guard, pressing the button as it exchanged hands.

A crisp, distinct image of an old Courata sitting upon a throne of silver appeared floating grandiosely in the air above the assembly. The grey mane of the Courata flickered slightly as the image corrected itself in preparation for playback.

"People of Khannstar," a voice from the holography unit boomed, "this is your Emperor, your recognized sovereign in this life and the next. The one before you is the eyes and ears and tongue of my court. Where you see him you shall see me. The colony of Khannstar in the Ghalon star system has thus far not enacted the Imperial Defense Edict 21034 or 21045 declared by myself during the past five kartlans. The regent of the colony is ordered to immediately begin preparations to ready the Ghalon system for defense against the new enemy, with my emissary as the military liaison in charge of the gear up preparation.

"Should the regent not accept responsibility and perform the duties of his office, my emissary is hereby given the right to remove the regent on the grounds of gross incompetence, a crime whose only punishment is death."

With that, the holographic image faded away and the holography unit fell silent.

A mix of anger, fear, and hatred washed across the regent's face. His fir stood on end, vibrating like tiny porcupine quills. The regent's eyes burned as his gaze turned back towards Muresoth and he screamed, "You will not leave this room alive! Insolent pultah bastard! Guards, kill him!"

Muresoth opened his mouth in a wild toothy smile. "The guards have their orders, and they come from a higher power than you or I. They come directly from the Emperor himself. The Emperor you swore an oath of fealty to when you accepted this position. The Emperor who shall judge your soul even after death. In this situation you must either accept defeat or embrace death. Which shall it be, regent?"

With an infuriated growl the regent lunged forward, claws at the ready to strike. As the regent moved across the space separating him from Muresoth, the Third Claw pulled his side arm from its holster, aimed, and fired. With a final pitiful scream, the regent fell to the ground at Muresoth's feet. Orangish-red blood, the same color as the tapestries adorning the regent's throne, poured from the gaping wound in the regent's chest out onto the white marble floors.

Muresoth holstered his weapon and turned to the officers behind them. They had dutifully not intervened in the matter and now stood still, looking at him questioningly.

"Get me in contact with the local defense commanders," Muresoth commanded, "We have a star system to protect."

The guards bowed and retreated from the room, reopening the heavy metal doors before running down the hall to fulfill their new orders.

This left newly appointed Regent Thouratar Muresoth alone in the palace's throne room. His palace, now. On the floor the body of the deposed regent remained still, the sea of blood continuing to expand across the floor. Muresoth scowled. The honorable response to the challenge of combat would have been to grapple claw-to-claw, tooth-

to-tooth to the death. But Muresoth did not have time for that. The Imperium did not have time for that. That was the Emperor's orders. And the Emperor was never wrong.

Or at least Muresoth hoped not.

The Courata Imperium

Courata Physiology

The Courata resemble a strange hybrid of giant sloth-like cat. Courata are roughly 2.3 meters in height and have extremely broad chests.

The Couratan head is boxy and disproportionately large compared to their other body features. A large snout is positioned forward. Courata have three large nostrils, each containing a separate organ to detect different nuances of scent. The "blood scent" of a Courata is extremely good, and they can track native Couratan prey for miles based on scent alone. This ability does not extend to alien lifeforms, as the natural conditioning of the "blood scent" hones in solely on those creatures that have the same genetic disposition as the Courata.

Two large ears sit atop the very back of their head.

The square jaws of the Courata are lined with no less than 33 teeth. The forward canine teeth are all long, slender and sharp, like steak knives. The rear molars are compact and flat, designed for crushing bone and hard-shelled nuts or insects.

Couratan eyesight is not particularly noteworthy. Most Courata suffer from at least mild

myopia, with the condition gradually deteriorating until blindness sets in towards the end of their life. This is a genetic defect innate to the Couratan species. Early on during the initial mapping of the Courata genome, geneticists struggled to isolate and remove the gene controlling this aspect of their physiology. Unfortunately for researchers, the "myopia gene" was in fact a by-product of the mutations that led to increased brain development and higher level intellectual abilities. This curtailed most future attempts to "correct" the problem.

Nonetheless, technology has helped to mitigate the Courata's optical difficulties. Vision-correcting eye surgeries are extremely common and are performed routinely throughout the course of a Courata's normal adult life. Those Courata who do not suffer from poor eyesight are admired within Courata society, and this particular genetic trait has typically been considered a sign of virility.

Courata hands each have six digits: five fingers and one opposable thumb. These digits end in short yet sharp claws optimized for cutting through flesh. Small barbs at the ends of each clawed finger (but not the thumb) act like fishhooks, preventing their prey from easily breaking away from a successful strike.

Courata Dreadnought Development

The Courata have historically preferred heavy, over-gunned star cruisers as their primary ships of the line. The best translation of the Courata term for this type of ship, *frehanshe'thi*, is "dreadnought"

or “battleship”. From a technical standpoint, these heavy Courata ships are more accurately battleships, as they are equipped with weapons of multiple types and caliber. However, to the Courata, the caliber of the weapon mount matters less than its intention. In the case of the Courata “dreadnought”, nearly all of its weaponry is specifically tailored towards destroying enemy starships with very little emphasis on point defense utility.

Courata dreadnoughts have taken many forms over the centuries since the Courata took the stars, but for purposes of historical classification there are a series of rough guidelines that separate dreadnoughts from non-dreadnoughts. Firstly, Courata dreadnoughts were always built around some form of heavy weapons mount. Before the 20th Century, this usually meant spinally mounted heavy primary laser cannons. Later the term was extended to the smaller heavy weapons mounted within the fleet. Secondly, the focus of the dreadnought is on ship killing, not on point defense. Dreadnoughts possess a very limited integrated point defense capability, usually just enough neutral particle beam weaponry to intercept incoming ballistic weapons or engage enemy

fighters. Almost all available space is invested in offensive firepower.

The first Courata dreadnought was the Frejada class, introduced in 1602. This early dreadnought design was the first to attempt to mount a HET laser on a mobile firing platform. Previous to the introduction of the Frejada, HET laser technology had only been demonstrated on fixed defense platforms and other large base installations. The Frejada was the largest class of ships in service at the time of their construction. Despite being dwarfed by later ship classes, the Frejada Warship (as it was later reclassified) remained a valid combatant for several decades after its introduction.

Escalations in the inter-house Courata arms race led to the development of the larger Chagaitir Dreadnought. Fully three times the size of its predecessor, the Frejada, the Chagaitir was the first Courata dreadnought class to provide for long-term operations through expanded cargo storage and handling systems. The Chagaitir was itself capable of operating independent of normal supply lines for upwards to ten months, a feat no prior warship could boast.

Despite improvements in size and logistics, the Chagaitir had little more firepower than a Frejada.

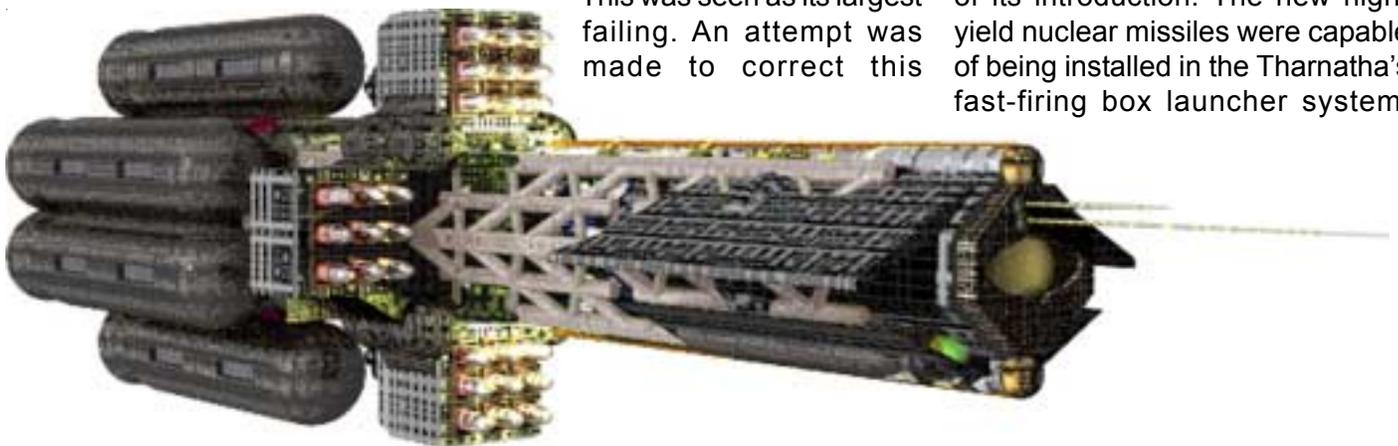
This was seen as its largest failing. An attempt was made to correct this

problem in the short-lived Staretha Dreadnought. An ill-conceived construction project, the Courata attempted in the Staretha to cram as much firepower as possible onto a hull only slightly larger than a Chagaitir. The Staretha Dreadnought suffered from numerous system problems that severely impinged on the class’ combat capabilities.

After the failure of the Staretha, the Courata turned away from the dreadnought for a time. A series of new, esoteric designs were fielded in an attempt to find a better alternative. Such efforts may have succeeded if not for the development of the Tharnatha Dreadnought.

The Tharnatha Dreadnought revolutionized the dreadnought philosophy. Bucking conventional wisdom, the engineers in charge of the ship’s design believed that “less is more” and incorporated that ideal into their construction. The Tharnatha rejected the belief that the dreadnought had to be literally bristling with weaponry. Rather, the armament was re-aligned to take advantage of emerging missile delivery apparatuses.

The success of the Tharnatha as a ship of the line is largely due to improved missile technology developed near the time of its introduction. The new high-yield nuclear missiles were capable of being installed in the Tharnatha’s fast-firing box launcher system.



Missing Pieces

These missiles were classified as “ship-killers” because a single warhead was potentially capable of destroying small destroyer class units.

The Tharnatha was the last of the Courata dreadnought to rely on connection struts. Connection struts allowed the Courata to assemble and field larger ships than their shipyards would typically have capacity for. It also allowed for shipyards to be specialized, producing one particular section of a ship in each yard in preparation for final assembly. As the Courata Imperium’s ship construction infrastructure matured, larger shipyards became the norm, allowing for ships with large integrated hulls to become commonplace.

The next-generation dreadnought was the Cathaara class. Only slightly larger than a Tharnatha, the Cathaara benefited from being constructed as a single spaceframe. The ship’s superstructure was sturdier than that of the previous Tharnatha and was more easily reinforced. The Cathaara boasted eight spinal HET laser mounts running the length of the ship, with four emitters forward and another four aft. Point defenses were minimal on this class, but the offensive firepower was unrivaled in the Courata fleet.

In the field, Cathaaras were well-respected ships of the line. Unfortunately, the poor firing arcs on their spinal laser mounts dismayed Courata admirals. Smaller combat vessels were catching up to the dreadnought lineage in terms of firepower, and their size and speed advantage was significant when compared to the larger dreadnoughts. This realization would eventually lead to another re-evaluation of the dreadnought

concept, culminating in the Keskmaada class. Unfortunately, design decisions would first lead to the implementation of the Tovahkka Dreadnought.

The Tovahkka was the last dreadnought to be developed by the Courata before contact with the Vendrizzi in 1764. The Tovahkka implemented an almost bizarre decision to mount the ship’s HET lasers in pods located at the end of an almost boomerang-shape head section. This isolated the lasers from the rest of the ship and did manage to give them better firing arcs. However, it also made the weapons more exposed and easier to destroy. The intent of designing the ship in this manner was to allow the dreadnought better targeting solutions in combat in order to counter smaller, nimbler opponents. Unfortunately, it led to a white elephant that could not hope to even best the Cathaara Dreadnought in combat.

Contact with the Vendrizzi and acquisition of jump technology revolutionized the Courata’s outlook on their dreadnought construction programs. Vendrizzi battleships dwarfed their own dreadnoughts and heavy cruisers, a fact that was disconcerting to the Courata. They had prided themselves on their fleets of massive, death-dealing starships. The realization that their fleet of dreadnoughts was but toys compared to the likes of the Vendrizzi was quite humbling. Not ones to be outdone by anyone, the Courata studied what they could of the Vendrizzi naval structure and began adopting it to their own forces. In several cases, the Vendrizzi were willing to assist and sell key technologies to the Courata in order to aid them in their pursuit of the stars. Many of these Vendrizzi-derived advances would find their

home in the new Keskmaada Dreadnought.

Keskmaada Dreadnought was truly a technological wonder. It was the first Courata capital ship to make use of an advanced fusion-powered drive system, replacing the Courata’s traditional, primitive hydrogen/helium reaction drives. Vendrizzi technical specialists were of great help in adapting the fusion drives for Courata fleet use. The Vendrizzi had themselves operated similar fusion engines during their early spacefaring period, though they had since abandoned them in favor of more esoteric gravitic drives. These new drives provided the ship with unmatched strategic and tactical speed, a major advantage in combat.

The Keskmaada supplemented its arsenal of four HET lasers with new turreted laser blasters. Laser blasters did only a little more damage than a neutral particle beam blast, but they did so at range. This gave skilled Keskmaada captains the ability to maintain a slow but steady bombardment of the target, cycling his laser blasters in such a way to keep fire pouring down on the enemy.

The only major flaw in the Keskmaada’s design proved to be its lack of rear-firing weaponry. This problem was never adequately addressed by the Courata, but the introduction of heavily armored escorts, such as the Imhra, minimized the severity of the flaw.

The Vendirizzi Republic

Vendriuzzi Physiology

The Vendirizzi are an insectoid race, measuring some 3.4 meters in length from head to tail. Propelled by their sixteen multi-jointed legs, the Vendirizzi look much like a giant caterpillar in general form, but the analogy ends there. The Vendirizzi have mottled purple and blue skin with their legs being a much darker, more forceful hue. A normal Vendirizzi could weigh a considerable amount, Their girth makes it hard to move anywhere quickly and most Vendirizzi are resigned to lumbering to their destination at a slow pace.

The Vendirizzi "face" is a mishmash of sensory organs. Fleshy protrusions of different shapes and sizes surround the Vendirizzi's mouth, which itself contains three retractable mandibles

used to draw in food for consumption.

Unlike most other intelligent species, the Vendirizzi's optics allows them to see in the infrared range. This confers little advantage to your typical Vendirizzi, but it is a characteristic worth noting.

The Vendirizzi were capable of raising up on their rear legs and "walking" at a very slow pace. It was courteous for a Vendirizzi to assume this stance when talking to others, a sign of respect as much as vulnerability.

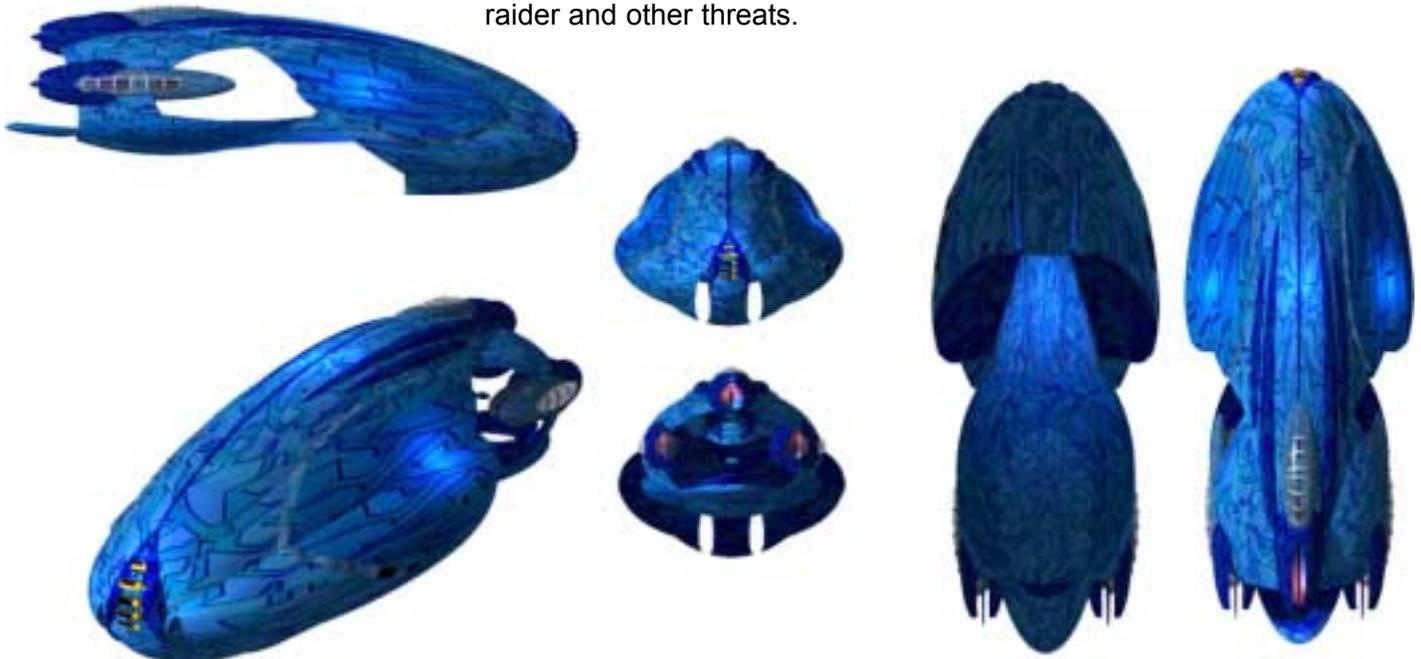
Vendirizzi Units

Shashalla Heavy Cruiser

The Shashalla Heavy Cruiser served as the premier Vendirizzi cruiser unit during the Ingalli War. Introduced a few decades before the war, the Shashalla was originally intended to serve as a long-range patrol cruiser unit within the Vendirizzi navy. Shashalla-commanded squadrons acted as sentinels along the Vendirizzi frontier, protecting small Vendirizzi colonial outposts from raider and other threats.

Shashalla Heavy Cruisers were ill equipped for the Ingalli War. They were designed during a time of great peace and stability for the Vendirizzi, a time when prevailing military ideology was shifting towards the defensive end of the spectrum and away from the offensive. The Ingalli proved the point that a purely defensive fleet, even as advanced as that fielded by the Vendirizzi, could not hope to stem the tide of wanton destruction a more aggressive and determined force could bring to bear.

Resources did not allow for the Shashalla to be extensively redesigned or significant war refits made available. Several variant hulls were experimented with during the course of the war, but none proved ultimately more successful. The Shashalla, despite its problems, remained the core Vendirizzi cruiser unit until very late into the war. In the fading years of the conflict, several new heavy cruiser hulls entered the scene vying to take the Shashalla's place in the forefront. The Ingalli War would be the Shashalla's last hurrah.



Shanshalo War Cruiser

During the course of the Ingalli War, the Vendirizzi research and development programs worked at a fevered pace in pursuit of new weapons and technologies that could counter Ingalli stealth cloaking. One of the weapons to come out of this crash development cycle was the precision laser cannon, a modified version of the traditional medium laser but optimized for long-range fire and high accuracy.

The Shasalla Heavy Cruiser was selected as the first hull to receive the precision laser retrofit. The design saw further combat-related modifications, including the removal of all flak cannons from the ship in favor of more offensive-minded weapons.

The resulting Shanshalo class of war cruisers served exclusively on the front lines. None were held in reserve by the Republic. Their performance in battle was mixed. The accuracy of the precision laser allowed the Shanshalos to acquire firing solutions on Ingalli ships at close to medium ranges, but was still confounded by Ingalli cloaks beyond medium ranges.

Shoshasha Attack Frigate

The Shoshasha Attack Frigate is one of the longest-serving classes ever to be fielded by the Vendirizzi defense ministry. A spiritual descendent of the older Vashashe, the Shoshasha Attack Frigate is not designed as a patrol ship but rather as a dedicated heavy weapons support frigate. The decision to arm the ship with four light particle cannons was hotly debated during its construction. The light particle cannon was widely considered inferior to other medium weapons available to the

Vendirizzi Republic at the time. It was however a weapon that was easy to build and maintain, the primary benefit the admiralty saw in its inclusion on the Shoshasha.

The VDS *Shoshasha* entered service on May 9, 1763 and was followed over the course of the next year by no less than thirteen other members of the class. These frigates were quickly disseminated throughout the Vendirizzi fleet, although most would find their homes in the frontier fleets that patrolled the Republic's borders. The vibrant color scheme selected for the class, while differing from series to series, ensured high visibility within the Vendirizzi fleet. The Vendirizzi felt that this was appropriate for a ship class that was very much responsible for "showing the flag" along alien borders.

After several years in active service, a general review of the Shoshasha project was completed to determine any problems with the design. The reviews and commentary submitted by frigate commanders were largely complimentary, especially in noting praise for the effectiveness of the vessel's light particle cannons. However, one common thread among the reports was a complaint about the lack of integrated point defense capabilities. It was true that the frigate was capable of fulfilling its anti-shipping mission objectives, but it relied too heavily on other fleet elements for escort. Enemy fighters in particular were



viewed as a very real threat to the survival of Shoshashas in combat. No clear combat data existed to support this claim, but the military advisory panel reviewing the project decided that it was best to listen to their commanders in this instance. As a result, the Shoshasha Attack Frigate fleet received a general service upgrade, including the replacement of the frigate's forward plasma cannon hardpoints with new first-generation blast xasers. These short-range x-ray laser weapons had proven effective in initial testing on the Vonshessa Light Cruiser design two years earlier and were only then beginning to work its way into the fleet.

Following the blast xaser upgrade, the Shoshasha Attack Frigates continued to their solid service to the Vendirizzi Defense Forces. The ship was not as strong as several newer ships, but was still one of the most maneuverable battle frigates in service within the still young Kilhansu League.

The Vendirizzi Ministry of Defense submitted a request for proposals for a Shoshasha replacement in 1824. It was felt that, after sixty years in the fleet, the time had come to replace the class with a newer, more modern analog. A final design concept was accepted in 1826 and construction began a year later. This new class, the Yenleshi, was roughly the same size as the Shoshasha and integrated a full defensive and offensive suite of high-tech weaponry.

The history of the Shoshasha Attack Frigates should have ended at this point in history, except for the intervention of the Ingalli. The outbreak of war with the mysterious Ingalli forced the Vendirizzi to re-commit their Shoshasha frigates to the front lines.

During the opening months of open war the Shoshasha frigate proved to be one of the most effective of the Vendirizzi's available skirmish units, out performing even its replacement, the Yenleshi.

Seeing this as an affirmation of the design, the Vendirizzi Ministry of Defense halted construction of the Yenleshi and forced through immediate funding for the construction of an upgraded Shoshasha class. In a radical series of upgrades, the Shoshasha's light particle cannons were replaced with larger, more powerful reaper cannons, a bleeding edge weapon technology developed less than a year before the war. This massive upgrade in firepower came at the price of construction lead-time as engineers struggled to redesign the craft to accept the heavy weapons upgrade. The adaptations were successful, but constructions of new Shoshasha Attack Frigates were delayed eight months.

In this new and final configuration, the Shoshasha Attack Frigate enjoyed incredible success throughout the remainder of the war. After the fall of the Ingalli Kingdom and the signing of the Treaty of Venlesh, the Shoshashas served another sixteen years before finally being decommissioned.

The Vendirizzi have a tradition of striking most of their obsolete warship hulls, but the Shoshasha's combat effectiveness made it a popular export hull. Stripped-down Shoshasha hulls were sold to the Kilharrans, Shilaks, and Zuffis to bolster their individual military forces.

Zonshade Cruiser

The Zonshade is a Vendirizzi cruiser unit dating back to the Yuanco War era. A capable cruiser,



the Zonshade was a relatively heavily armed multi-purpose warship. During its history in service, cruisers of this class served in every position from planetary defense to heavy convoy escort. The most common location to find a Zonshade was on the frontier borders of the Republic, keeping watch over the dozens of fledgling colonies that called the frontier home.

The Zonshade Cruiser fleet underwent several minor refits, but by the time of a major electronics overhaul in 1726 the cruiser had been fully relegated to the role of a light system patrol cruiser. Newer ships and technologies had displaced it in the nearly fifty years since its introduction. In the role of a dedicated patrol cruiser, the Zonshade continued to serve for another twenty years before the Republic finally ordered the remaining class members mothballed.

The Zonshades would have sat quietly for some time if not for

the Ingalli War. With combat-capable hulls at a premium, the Republic reactivated the remaining Zonshade Cruisers from mothballs and sent them to the frontlines to act as heavy escorts for their newer cousins. The antiquated quad particle beam arrays proved that they were still effective even in obsolescence by providing excellent point defense coverage. The mortality rate of Zonshade Cruisers was alarmingly high, but the Vendirizzi had little choice in committing them to battle.

Five Zonshade cruisers survived the Ingalli War intact. Another seven crippled hulks also survived the conflict, but were scuttled or scrapped due to the extent of their damage. Of the five intact survivors, two were sold (sans weaponry) to the Tinudrans and Ralosians for use in their joint fleet exercises and the remaining three were transferred into Kilharran hands.

New Systems & Technologies

Hybrid Gravitic Drives

Before developing full gravitic drive systems, a power will often first utilize a form of hybrid gravitic/reaction propulsion. This “stepping stone” technology provides a species with experience using gravitic propulsion while not relying on it as their sole form of maneuvering. This can be very important, as primitive gravitic drives are highly susceptible to total system failure.

Any unit with a hybrid gravitic drive system installed should be treated as possessing a normal gravitic drive system until such time as their engine takes damage. Once the engine is damaged the gravitic drive portion of the hybrid propulsion system will fail, leaving the reaction drives to pick up the slack.

Hybrid gravitic drives are also much more likely to experience catastrophic failures. All critical hits rolled on either the engine or thrusters of a ship with hybrid gravitic drives gain a +2 penalty. In the case of engine criticals, all critical effects are doubled. This means that instead of losing 2 thrust the ship will lose 4, and instead of not being able to maneuver for a turn the ship will not be able to maneuver for two turns.

Fighters with hybrid gravitic drives lose gravitic drive advantages whenever one or more fighters in the flight have lost half or more of their structure (round down). Players may have their fighters voluntarily

dropout to maintain the advantage. Because of the delicate nature of the fighter’s hybrid drives, very few factions have deployed effective fighter units with such engines.

Primitive Gravitic Drives

Unlike hybrid gravitic drives, primitive gravitic drives are a wholly gravitic propulsion solution. They do not use any form of backup reaction drive in case of primary drive failure, much to their detriment.

Primitive gravitic drives function like normal gravitic drives, except that any engine hit will result in the worst engine critical being applied during the Critical Hit Segment with no roll necessary!

HET Lasers

High Energy Transfer Lasers, or HET Lasers, are a common low-tech laser technology operated by many races before the development of more advanced and reliable weapons technologies. The HET Laser family of laser weapons functions by detonating bomb-pumped laser munitions *within* the firing ship. The energy released from the explosion is then directed into a series of laser emitters and focused into a coherent beam.

For many low tech races HET Lasers are the only way to produce high damage laser weapons. The use of HET Lasers does not come without disadvantage. All HET Lasers require ammunition in order to fire and this ammunition must be stored aboard ship, which means that a ship operating HET Lasers will find much of its internal volume dedicated to munitions storage. The storage bays for the bomb-pumped munitions are not listed on the ship

control sheet. In most cases a ship will have more than enough ammunition to effectively fight in any given engagement, though the logistics strain will likely be felt in a campaign.

HET Laser weapons are space intensive, requiring a large amount of space for installing the weapon. The detonation chamber, laser emitters, and munitions storage required for each laser is sizeable and takes up more space than a comparable laser capable of doing similar damage.

Another disadvantage of HET Lasers is the amount of hard radiation that is given off when each bomb-pumped munition is detonated. The necessary radiation shielding can also affect the relative size of the weapon. Those races that are incredibly resistant to radiation can get by with less radiation shielding, while less resistant races may not be able to use such weapons at all without mounting them away from the hull or in uninhabitable sections of the unit.

Because of these failings most races abandon HET Laser-type weapons early in their spacefaring career.

Box Launchers

Many of the more technologically primitive powers in the Escalation Wars universe make use of box launchers in place of standard missile racks. Box launchers do not make use of internal magazines. Instead, all of the launcher’s missiles are stored in an external launch vehicle from which they are fired. Box launchers cannot make use of magazines even if they exist on the mounting vessel.

Box launchers do not provide anything but basic launch

acceleration to the missiles they fire, whereas many varieties of traditional internal launchers use electromagnetic rails to accelerate warheads out into space. The launchers also do not provide any post-firing fire control guidance, resulting in poor firing solutions for box launched missiles. This is represented in the box launcher's weapon data card as a negative fire control penalty. This penalty applies against all missiles launched by the box launcher, even if the missile's target ends movement outside of the launcher's line of site.

Finally, the external box launchers confer a mixed advantage to internal, magazine-fed missile racks. A box launcher will suffer a munition critical on any natural critical roll of '19' or '20'. On a natural '19', the missiles remaining in the box launcher detonate, but the ship is able to safely jettison the launcher before it can cause any real damage to the ship. In this case, mark the box launcher destroyed. If a natural '20' is rolled for the critical, then the missiles still detonate, but the ship was *not* able to jettison the launcher before they exploded. Treat this like a normal missile rack magazine explosion.

Fuel Pods

The early Courata used fuel pods to store refined hydrogen/helium fuels on long-distance voyages in their solar system. The size and number of fuel pods found on later Courata warships is astounding. The bulky pods made up a proportionately large amount of a ship's mass.

In Babylon 5 Wars terms, treat Courata fuel pods like Pak'ma'ra plasma batteries, with the caveat that energy stored in

fuel pods may only be used to purchase extra thrust.

If a fuel pod is hit, roll a d20 critical at the end of the turn, adding the number of damaged boxes. On a '20' or more, the pod detonates. Multiply the amount of fuel in the pod at the beginning of the turn by 5 and apply as flash damage (no splash) to the side the fuel pod is mounted on. If another fuel pod is damaged, the player should immediately roll a critical for that pod. This can lead to a catastrophic chain reaction that destroys the ship.

Players can choose to dump fuel. Select the number of points to be dumped (up to the available amount per pod). The fuel is evacuated at the end of the turn. Points of power stored Fuel Pods that are dumping fuel cannot be used to buy additional thrust. Once placed, record the amount of fuel dumped into the hex. If any unit fires into or out of that hex in a future turn, they will ignite the fuel, scoring an amount of plasma flash damage to all units in the containing hex. Each turn after the fuel is dumped in the hex, the amount of fuel in the hex will be reduced by 50% (minimum 1) during the Pre-Movement Terrain Effects Segment.

* * *



I hope you have enjoyed this look at some of the new developments happening in the Escalation Wars universe. I am only sorry it took so long to make this information available! I promise that I will be getting more work done on more ships whenever I can find the time.

For those that might be interested, the first Escalation Wars book, Empire Rising, will be soon be released by VBAM Games as a supplement for the Victory by Any Means Campaign Guide campaign system. For those that wish to show their support for the Escalation Wars, buying either the print or electronic copy of the book would be appreciated! Emotional blackmail is something I am not beyond! HAR HAR HAR, as the Umgah would say.

The Sshel'ath Scrapyard

Fresh from the Striking Block

By Tyrel Lohr & Steve Cross

Author's Note: These ships were submitted by Steve Cross as part of a discussion on possible holes in the Sshel'ath order of battle, or else ship concepts that he had come up with. As such, Steve deserves credit for the concepts behind each of these new Sshel'ath vessels.

Nalaxaun Attack Frigate Araunax Variant (Uncommon)

Initially, the electron polarizer was deployed on only one ship in the Sshel'ath fleet, the Danesti Battlecruiser. Several Alliance members entertained the idea of refitting existing starship classes with the polarizer, but the idea met with some resistance from the military establishment. The polarizer was a largely untried piece of technology. There had been a few engagements against minor Novon lords and raiders in which Danesti Battlecruisers had participated, but not enough to provide hard evidence on the merits of electron polarizer usage.

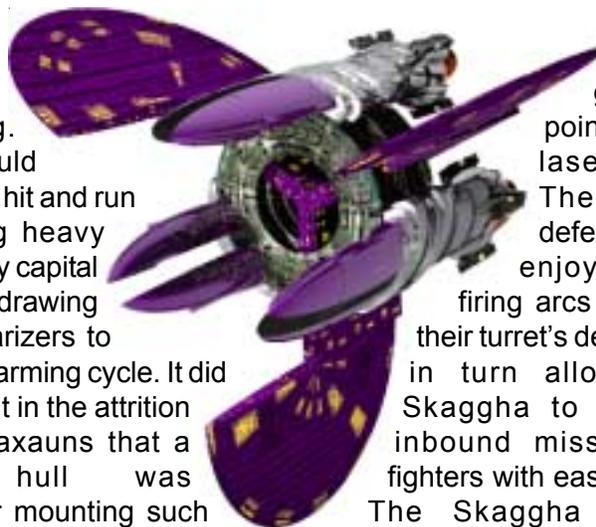
In a bid to deploy the polarizer in greater numbers, the Sshel'ath Alliance authorized the construction of a limited production run of heavily modified Araunax Frigates. These frigates would be stripped of nearly all of their existing weaponry and have it replaced by a pair of electron polarizers. For close-in defense, this new Nalaxaun Heavy Frigate would mount a quartet of light particle beams in place of the ship's original light gauss cannons.

Early combat trials of the Nalaxaun were promising. The frigates could perform effective hit and run attacks, scoring heavy damage to enemy capital ships before withdrawing to allow the polarizers to complete their rearming cycle. It did become apparent in the attrition rate of the Nalaxauns that a frigate-size hull was inappropriate for mounting such large, slow firing weapons as the electron polarizer. However, the weapon had proven itself in battle, and would become a fixture of the Sshel'ath fleet for decades to come.

Skaggha Escort Frigate Skavna Variant (Common)

During the Neliste War, the Sshel'ath discovered (to their detriment) that their fleet lacked large-scale anti-ballistic intercept capabilities as well as anti-fighter defenses. The Neliste made heavy use of box missile launchers which allowed them to launch massive missile salvos at Sshel'ath ships. Without effective organic missile defenses or dedicated screening units, the Sshel'ath found themselves battered during the initial weapon fire exchanges.

To remedy the situation, Sshel'ath engineers created plans for a variant class based off of the popular Skavna Torpedo Frigate to cover this glaring flaw in the fleet's order of battle. This new vessel, classified as the Skaggha Escort Frigate, replaced the Skavna's torpedo arsenal for a full second-



generation point defense laser array. These point defense lasers enjoyed wide firing arcs thanks to their turret's design. This in turn allowed the Skaggha to intercept inbound missiles and fighters with ease.

The Skaggha and its successors proved vital during the Escalation Wars where they were frequently called upon to screen the larger cruisers of the Sshel'ath fleet.

Nakesra Heavy Cruiser Nasarra Variant (Uncommon)

The Nakesra was an attempt to upgrade the firepower of the Nasarra Attack Cruiser by adding heavy and standard laser cutters to the hull in place of its traditional weaponry. The heavy laser cutter had previously been demonstrated on the Ouxal'en Battleship in the 1960s, but had seen limited deployment since the Second Novon War.

The Nakesra Heavy Cruiser was generally despised by A'hel'is and Mst'as commanders, and few of these ships were operated by those two navies. Minor Sshel'ath nations were more likely to favor the Nakesra since it gave them added firepower for their fleets at a cost far less than that of a new construction Vipindra Heavy Cruiser.

* * *



An Unseen Threat to the Federation

By Mike Marshall & Tim Sylvester

Introduction

Several months ago, Mike Marshall and Tim Sylvester sent me a full set of new Reman starships in SCS format. Their intentions were to make the post-Nemesis Remans into a fully formed military force. After having them sit here on the hard drive for so long, lost amidst the hectic realities of real life, I thought now would be an appropriate time to let the ships see the light of day.

Fans of the Star Trek Conversions are encouraged to give these Remans a look and see how well they play. There are a few new systems that have been created by the authors, and they may need a little bit of finessing to find the right balance.

Reman Technologies

Inverse Gravometric

Drive Systems

The Inverse Gravometric Drive System is the pinnacle of Reman technological advancement in impulse drive design. This form of impulse drive is designed to allow even the largest of battleships to maneuver with the agility of something half its size. Inverse Gravometric Drive Systems utilize dark matter along with the standard matter/antimatter reaction in order to produce a more stable thrusting system. A byproduct of this technology is that the engines and thrusters are harder to disable.

Inverse Gravometric Drives receive a -2 bonus to all critical rolls made against the engine and thrusters of a ship equipped with a drive of this type.

Ships equipped with this drive system are generally easy to spot, their nature betrayed by the "black" energy hovering around the thruster nozzles and intake ports.

Thalaron Torpedo

This new weapon system fires a warhead at the target which contains a deadly thalaron radiation payload. Upon detonation, the torpedo attempts to flood an entire

section of the target ship with the thalaron particles. If shields resist the attack, then the ship is unharmed. However, if the blast breaches the target's shields, then each system on the facing section receives 1d10 damage (ignoring armor). This damage represents the death of the crews manning their posts.

Any damage from the thalaron torpedo that breaches the shields is lost, as the damage only affects shielding. This is the primary deficiency of Thalaron Torpedo technology; other than damaging shields, the torpedo leaves behind very little other damage.

Reman Starships

Advanced Scout

This advanced scout can act either in support of a Reman fleet, providing ELINT support to its fleet members, or gather valuable data in remote sections of the universe using its sensor array. The scout is the only known Reman unit to utilize the expensive pulse disruption bolt technology. This weapon, which is the functional equivalent of four

Missing Pieces

individual disruption bolts, is extremely temperamental and is prone to rapid burnout after combat.

Note: As with the Predator, I have some problems with the pulse disruption bolt. Use at your own caution, but there is a chance these weapons will be changed in the future.

Advanced Warbird

This large, distinctive warbird design was developed to fill the niche between the Scimitar and Valdore in combined Reman/Romulan fleet actions. The ship epitomizes the Reman design philosophy of fielding small numbers of extremely powerful warships in their planetary navy. The Advanced Warbird is quite easily a match for the Federation Sovereign Dreadnought.

Attack Warbird

The Attack Warbird is an extremely aggressive cruiser design based off of older Reman assault ships used during the Dominion War. These ships are heavily shielded and armed with large numbers of disruption bolts.

Evicerator Warbird

A large, well-shielded heavy cruiser, the Evicerator is the first Romulan vessel to mount Thalaron Torpedoes. These outlawed weapons work along the same lines as the Thalaron Cannon found on the Scimitar Advanced Warbird, using deadly thalaron radiation to destroy organic matter. However, the amount of thalaron particles stored in each torpedo cause only minor damage to the hull, though the wide-area detonation of the torpedo itself can cause brutal damage to enemy shielding.



Hammer Scout

Not an ELINT ship, as the name might suggest, but a simple long-range light combat vessel. The Hammer Scout is used in search and destroy missions launched based on the fruits of intelligence gathering operations. These ships are typically found operating solo, on the hunt for their quarry.

Predator

This extremely rare class of warbird was designed with an eye as being the replacement for the Scimitar class. The Predator is enormous, as large or larger than the Dominion's largest battleship hulls. This grand battleship is bristling with firepower, a typical Reman trait which delves deeply into applied psychological warfare.

One of the special properties of the Predator is its use of a secondary shield system that provides redundant coverage into all arcs. This small shield system is maintained so long as any deflector shield is operational on the Predator. Unlike normal shield projections, this omni-directional shield can absorb damage from any incoming shot, even if damage has already been assigned to another shield projection.

Note: Of all of the Reman ships submitted, this is the one that I have the least love for, and it will likely remain conjectural. However it is included here for fan review and use.

Safire Attack Scout

The Safire Attack Scout is a small ELINT ship designed for combat ELINT exclusively. The ship relies on speed and firepower to get the job done. A Safire can take quite a beating in battle, but is still weaker than other comparable battle scouts.

Subhawk

The Subhawk is a short-range Reman patrol ship designed for destroyer-type missions in Romulan/Reman space. In general, the Subhawk is utilized as a throwaway combatant, and is built in large quantities as time and resources allow in Reman shipyards.

Torpedo Cruiser

The Remans designed their Torpedo Cruiser to act as a dedicated support fleet command unit. Capable of firing half a dozen photon torpedoes in a volley, the Torpedo Cruiser can maintain its distance while protecting other valuable auxiliary units. In some instances, Reman commanders have chosen to transfer their flag to

a Torpedo Cruiser after their own warbird has neared destruction.

Vixen Corvettes

These small ships are used for local system defense near Remus. They are seldom seen, as they are typically operating in pairs patrolling the space lanes in search of pirates and traitors to the Reman leadership.

Reman Fighters

Advanced Fighter

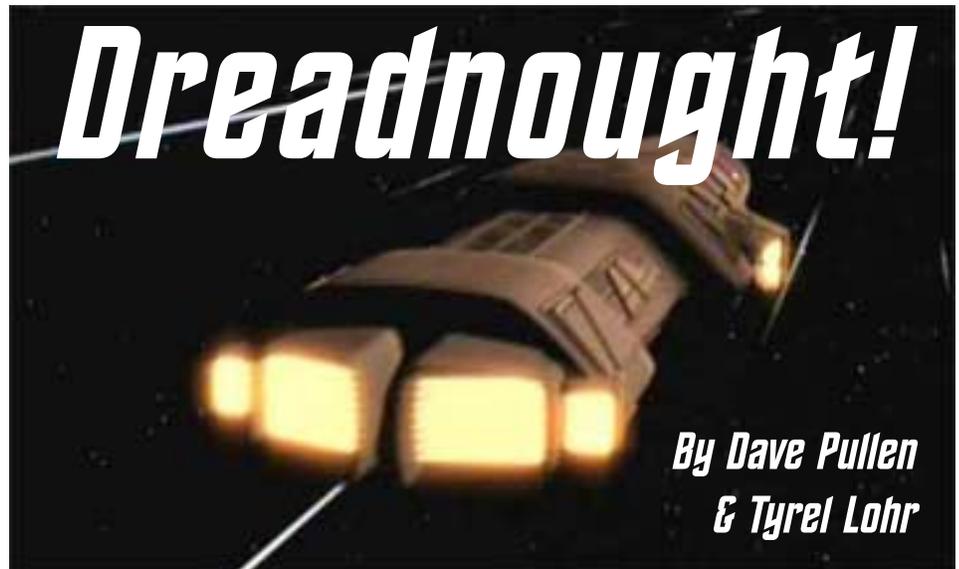
The Remans developed the Advanced Fighter as a means to increase the firepower deployable from their larger capital ships. These fighters, the size of a Federation Danube Runabout, carry slightly more firepower than the Scorpions that they replace.

The Remans are considered to have "Federation Hangars" for purposes of basing super-heavy fighters.

Scythe Flyers

The Scythe Flyers are advanced fighter craft designed to supplement the existing Scorpion fighter craft used to the Reman rebellion. The Scythes have considerable firepower and adequate defenses.

* * *



*By Dave Pullen
& Tyrel Lohr*

Introduction

One of the many ships that have fallen through the cracks the last year is Dave Pullen's version of the Cardassian Dreadnought seen in an episode of Voyager. The "dreadnought" was a self-guided weapon system whose purpose was to destroy a Maquis supply depot. To this end, the dreadnought was essentially a giant antimatter missile.

I never tried tackling the dreadnought myself, but I really liked what Dave did with his version of the unit. The vessel is a LCV, and a fairly well armed one at that. Dave handled the dreadnought's special weapon rules nicely, creating an interesting scenario specific weapon system.

The use of large number of dreadnoughts in any scenario should be frowned upon. For that reason, the dreadnought has been set at a Restricted Deployment (10%) availability level. Still, it might be possible in a campaign for a Cardassian player to abuse the dreadnought's raw firepower.

Special Rules

At the beginning of a scenario, the Cardassian player

must stipulate a single target for the dreadnought. Once programmed, the dreadnought will concentrate entirely on the selected target. The dreadnought will ignore all other targets as it attempts to enter the same hex as the target, at which point it will detonate. Upon detonation, the dreadnought will score 250 damage to the target, 100 damage to all other units in the hex, and 50 damage to all units one hex distant. All such damage is resolved in flash mode.

Should another unit ram the dreadnought before it reaches its target, consider the ramming factor of the dreadnought to be 50. The dreadnought is designed so that it will not prematurely detonate.

If the dreadnought's primary target is destroyed before it can complete its mission, the ship will go offline and cease movement. The dreadnought will continue at its previous speed and course until a Cardassian (or enemy) technician arrives on the dreadnought after the battle to reprogram it. The dreadnought cannot be reprogrammed during a battle.

* * *

OF Fusions and Fighters: The Evolution of the Hydrans in the Babylon 5 Wars Game System

Star Fleet Battles: The Hydrans

By Tyrel Lohr

Hydrans? What Now?

Who are the Hydrans? As a fan of the original Star Trek series, but having little interest or knowledge of any of the tabletop licenses, I had absolutely no clue who the Hydrans were. I had some inklings that they had come from Star Fleet Battles, but I didn't know for sure having never been introduced to that game system. To me, Star Fleet Battles was just a nasty insult people used by the B5W Mailing List. SFB was synonymous (and still is) with phased movement, overcomplicated rules, and excessive power management.

To those of you who, like myself, only recently crawled out from under a fairly comfortable rock, the Hydrans are one of the core alien

species created by the designers of SFB to act as foes for the core Star Trek races introduced in the original series. The Hydran signature in SFB was their reliance on fighters, and their use of esoteric weaponry, namely fusion beams and hellbore torpedoes. The Hydrans joined the Lyrans and Kzinti as the "new blood" of the SFB background, providing greater fodder for the political and military backdrop of the apocryphal General War.

Hydrans? We Don't Need No Stinking Hydrans!

The first person that broached the topic of converting the Hydrans from SFB to the B5W Star Trek Conversion was Ben Rubery, a long-departed member of the B5W community and AOG freelancer. Ben had previously converted several Klingon and Romulan designs over from SFB to the conversion to help flesh out their early fleets.

To say the least, I was skeptical about adding the Hydrans to the conversion. Fighter use was never common in the Star Trek universe, with the first documented use of true fighter craft occurring in Deep Space Nine as part of the Dominion War story line. In all other cases, shuttle-sized craft were picked off with ease and generally viewed as a non-threat. So a fighter heavy race in the TOS period seemed a little out of flavor.

The other major problem with converting the Hydrans is with how the fighters could be correctly balanced, both internally within the conversion as well as against standard B5 ships. By their very design, Star Trek ships are handicapped when it comes to anti-fighter defenses, so I knew that making the Hydran fighters as strong as B5 equivalents would be a nightmare. I also did not want the game to devolve to the point where Hydran fighter hordes could destroy any other Original Series vessel.

Ben and I discussed this issue as we talked about how

additional SFB ships, including Hydrans, could be converted to keep them consistent with my existing ships. Ben produced the weapon stats and icons for the Hydrans as well as several of their ships before his schedule prevented him from working any further on them.

Fast forward a year, possibly more. I had all but shelved the Hydrans by that point, mainly due to my own time constraints. Ben hadn't sent me any other information, and I didn't have anywhere else to get the information from. Christian Meador finally offered to send me his SFB books if I would keep working on new ships. I agreed. Sadly for Christian, scheduling conflicts have largely precluded my work in that direction, but that is another story entirely.

At about the same time, a series of individuals began assailing me, asking when the Hydran ships would be ready. Now, the set of ships that Ben sent were going to make

the grade, but I was still unsure of how they would fit into the larger scope of the complete Hydran fleet. So I began asking these new contributors questions, gathering input on capabilities, and revising Ben's initial ships while I designed new classes.

Enter the Hydrans

The Hydrans seem to me to be one of the few SFB races that truly show unique weapon design and specialization within the SFB milieu. Not to offend any of our resident SFB junkies, but most of the races created for that game system are bland and boring. Whereas B5W went too far in the other direction, creating too many gimmick races and systems, the SFB design scheme seems to have been wholly formed from vanilla extract. Now, having never played it (the rules scare me away quite effectively), I am not being fair to the game

system. However (you know there was going to be a however, right?) the appearance of the ships themselves seem poorly (or lazily) conceived, being little more than minor modifications of each race's one signature unit. "Graphic design by engineers" is the thought that comes to mind. But, with the Hydrans, the designers seemed to take some time to give them a little extra flair, extending out to at least their signature units and technologies.

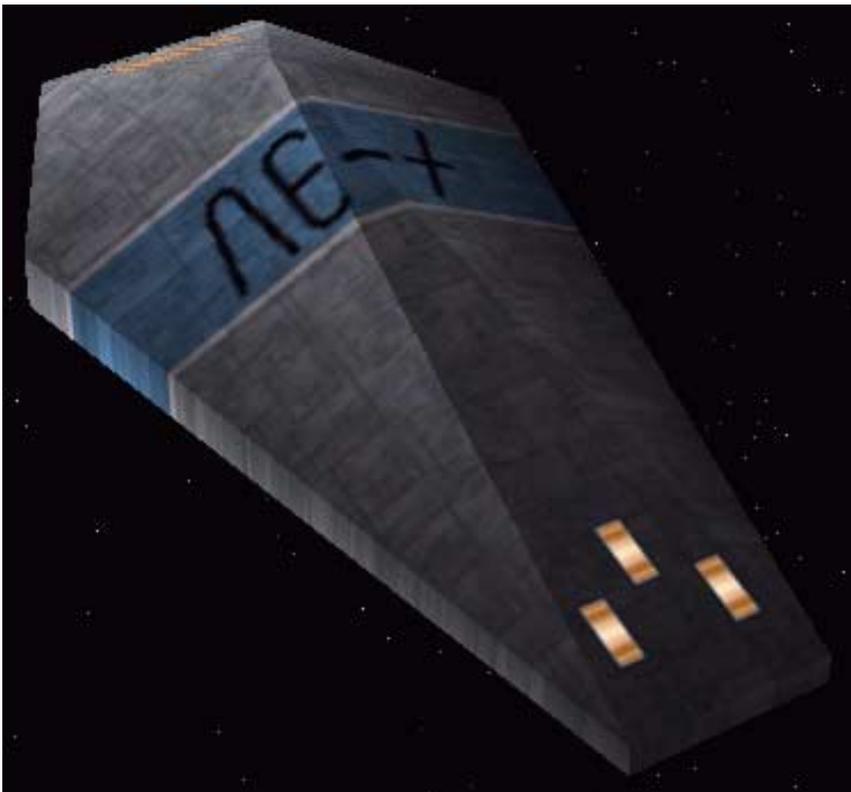
Hydran Ships

In converting the SFB numbers over, it became apparent that the Hydran ships were lightly built compared to other SFB races. This has produced a fleet of vessels that carry a dizzying amount of weaponry and fighters, but it is also a fleet that suffers from poor survivability. Lean structure blocks and mediocre shields mean that a Hydran player is going to be relying on their fighters as a long-range, first strike platform to neutralize the enemy before the Hydran battle line can enter the fray.

The Hydran ships make up for their deficiencies by having large, meaty internal systems. Ben did this on the Lancer series, and I felt that it was a fairly interesting way of approaching Hydran ship design. The Hydrans can survive a series of good internal hits, but their ships will otherwise pop easily under concentrated gunfire.

My Three Warp Engines

I am still at a loss for why SFB decided to give some of their later ships three or more warp engines as standard equipment. For some reason, the Hydrans just love



Missing Pieces

it. For this reason almost all of the Hydran ships (if not all) are equipped with three warp nacelles. This gives them a great deal of redundancy where warping out is concerned, and provides some decent “padding” to their rear sections. However, to get the most out of the Hydrans (and make the otherwise useless warp engines worth something), it might be recommended to play the Hydrans using a home rule where warp engines either generate power or incur power losses with damage.

Hydran Weapon Systems

Most of the weapon systems herein were designed by Ben Rubery. I modified some of the statistics, but I felt that Ben was in a much better position to know what the weapons should be doing than I, and so I bowed to his greater knowledge of the subject matter.

Fusion Beam

The fusion beams are the primary weapons of the Hydran fleet. Roughly equivalent to a medium phaser, the fusion beams have a shorter range but slightly better fire control against capital ship and heavy combat vessels. The weapon has a rate of fire of one per turn, but requires a cooldown turn after each firing. This gives the Hydrans some interesting power management options since they can use this extra power to reinforce shielding or sustain other fusion beams during these downtimes.

The fusion beam can also fire in an overloaded manner. Weapon overloads were common among SFB weapons, but this has not typically translated into the B5W conversion. The Hydran fusion beam overload allows it to score



more fixed damage, but requires twice the normal power, and also incurs a critical. Is the extra damage worth the double arming requirement? It all depends on your circumstances.

Hellbore Torpedo

The hellbore is a special torpedo weapon which scores damage against all shield projections of a vessel. It has been noted that the hellbore in SFB only targets the weakest shield, but I prefer Ben’s simpler version of the hellbore, as it makes it more conducive to play in crossover battles where deflector shields are not used.

Gatling Defense Phaser

The weapon was converted as three point defense phasers in a single mount. The gatling defense phaser (or simply gatling phaser) was probably the most contentious weapon that Ben created for the Hydrans. Debates on the Planetside

mailing list decried the intercept capability of the gatling phaser, but I did not feel it was completely unbalancing. It simply means that the Hydrans can put out some weighty intercept to protect themselves from torpedoes, which is nice considering they lack photons of their own.

My biggest quandary with the gatling phasers is that Ben mounted his weapons on forward/aft hemisphere arcs, but all of the SFB sheets that I have seen for the Hydrans show them being left/right hemispheres. I opted to keep the forward/aft orientation on the Lancer/Knight series, but have changed them on the rest.

New Rules

Enveloping Mode

Some weapons, such as Hydran hellbore torpedoes, fire in an enveloping mode. Enveloping mode weapon fire attacks every outer section of the target unit, not just the

facing section. This can confer great advantages, especially against ships operating weak deflector shields.

When an enveloping mode weapon hits a unit, roll for damage normally then divide it by 4, rounding all fractions up. This amount of damage is then scored against each of the target's deflector shield projections (if the unit uses deflector shields). Any remaining damage is then rolled against the appropriate section of the ship. In essence, a capital ship will receive an attack against each of its outer sections; HCVs and MCVs will receive two attacks each to their outer sections; and LCVs will take four attacks.

Why do LCVs take four attacks? HCVs and MCVs have multiple hit charts for the shots to be spread around. They take four shots, but can spread it between the forward and aft hit charts. The LCV

only has a general hits chart, so it has to take all four attacks to that chart.

Each individual damage segment scored by an enveloping weapon is resolved in standard flash mode against the target, but scores no overkill against other units in the target unit's hex.

Future of the Hydrans

It has taken a long time to get the Hydrans into a state where I think they are fairly balanced against the existing ships. They should still be a very real threat to the other Original Series ships, but they shouldn't be unbeatable.

So where are more Hydran ships? Simply put, I am still not convinced that they are converted over all that perfectly. Despite being

in limited playtest for the better part of a year, I have yet to get any good playtest reports aside from short, detail-less "they did fine" comments from the players I sent them off to. So, for those players that are bored on a weekend, take the ships out and *please* pass along thoughts and comments on the battle. The more comments and the details the better.

A Word of Thanks

The following players have helped with the Hydran conversions in one way or another, and deserve to be called out for their support (or, in some cases, nagging insistence) of the Hydrans in B5W: Ben Rubery, Jeff Perkins, Chris Nasipak, David McClenaghan, and Jim Selinger.

* * *

More Thirdspace Ships!

By Jorg Skarther

Fleet Support Ship

One of the few HCV's in the Thirdspace Aliens fleet. The Fleet Support Ship lacks the firepower and durability of bigger ships and the speed and efficiency of the smaller vessels. It is by far not their favorite craft, but still a welcome addition for base defense or artillery support. In fights where it can't stay away from the enemy, the Fleet Support Ship can only barely defend itself and tends to be rather useless.

Heavy Attack Craft

The Heavy Attack Craft is one of the few Thirdspace Alien vessels based on the modern Attack Craft design. As fast as their smaller cousins, equipped with a much more flexible load of weapons, and higher

energy output and stronger shields, the Heavy Attack Craft is a formidable opponent. Still they are rarely seen with the main fleets, since the Thirdspace Aliens prefer great numbers of their standard Attack Crafts to overwhelm the enemy.

Gunship

A fast medium ship perfectly suited to add a considerable punch to second-line fleets that are mainly composed from Attack Crafts. There are only a few Gunships designated to the main fleets, because those contain more than enough firepower thanks to their Heavy Cruisers.

Battleship

The Thirdspace Aliens

Battleship is a nightmare of a ship, many kilometers long and equipped with the firepower equivalent of several cruisers. The Battleship is the core of the largest fleets the Thirdspace Aliens field. In its colossal hangars this juggernaut carries over sixty Attack Crafts - a powerful fleet in and of itself. Under its brightly glowing shield-sphere, the Battleships hull bristles with heavy weapons and only the most powerful fixed installation of the First Ones can survive more than a single salvo from its guns. However, there is a major drawback when it comes to this ship: it is simply too big to fit through the Vorlon's Thirdspace Gate.

* * *

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The GREAT MACHINE is an unofficial, fan-based electronic publication dedicated to the Babylon 5 Wars game system.

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Coming Next Issue...

GOOD QUESTION!

Thanks to Tyrel, we are now a month behind on the issues! Woo hoo!

But what do we have slated for next month?

Tal-kona'sha: David Ainsworth's rendition of the Tal-kona-sha, complete with a smattering of ship control sheets. The SCS will likely be spread over several issues.

The Nexus: Races from Geoffrey and Jeremy Stano's original setting. A historical outlook and ships for at least two factions will be included.

Prometheus: Travis Watson introduces us to his Prometheus setting, in which a race called the Vernakki are causing their own fair share of headaches.

If you have anything to send to us, please feel free to send in your submissions. Also, if there are any able-bodied SCS makers that would be willing to be called upon to serve, let us know and we will keep you in mind. Most of the submissions for next (this) month's issue require extensive SCS creation, so any and all help will be appreciated, and help to get the issue out faster.

As always, remember to send your submissions to submissions@firenebula.com. You, too, may help solve a mystery! Oops, wrong program!

Submission Deadline: December 24, 2004
