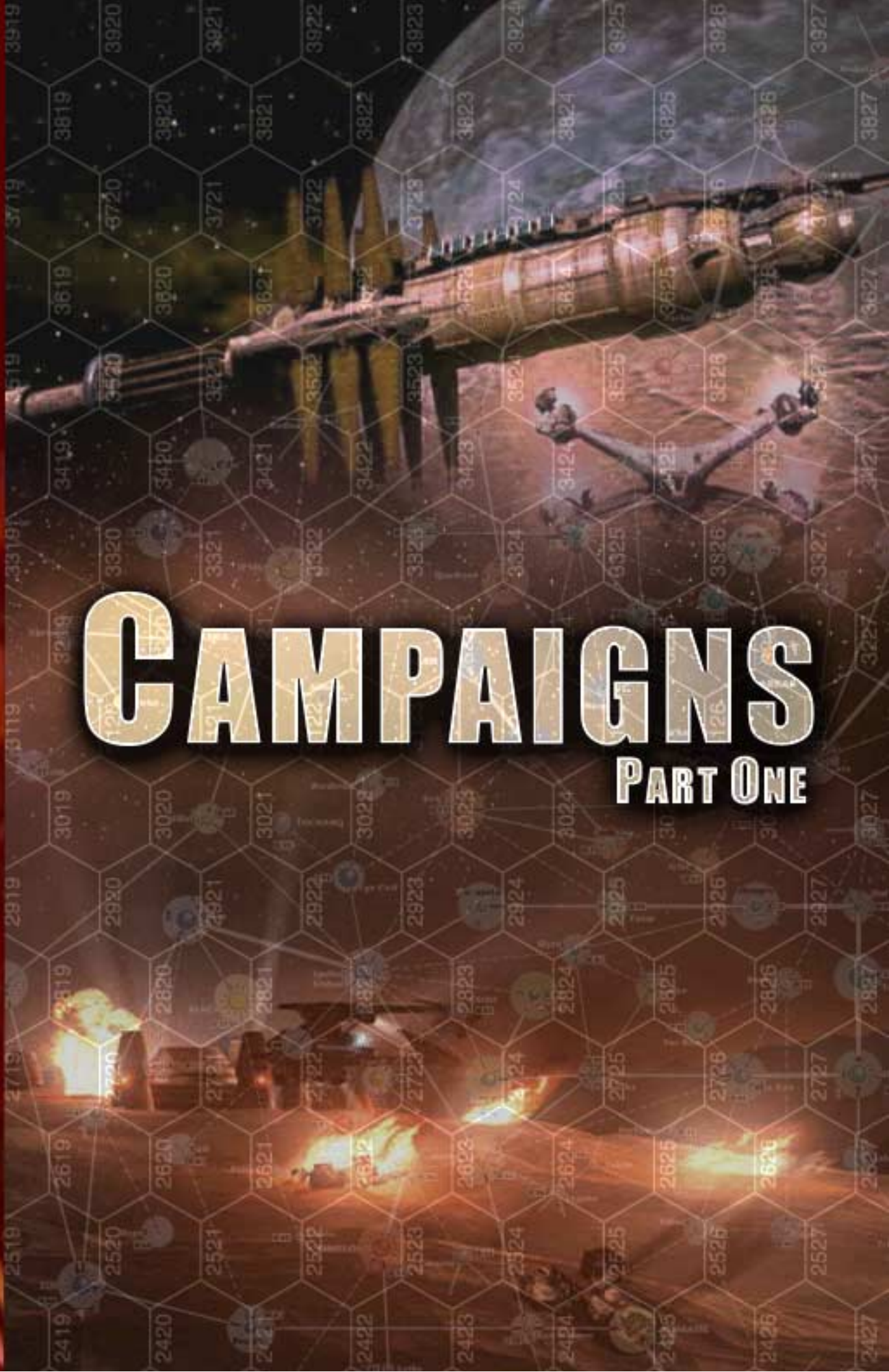


# THE GREAT MACHINE

ISSUE 14 March 2005

## CAMPAIGNS

PART ONE





## Many Welcomings!

Zathras has returned again, he has! Mean blue woman was sent back to place where Draal found her at. Not the One, no... not the One!

Military campaigns are of great interest to Zathras, but they are of even greater interest to Zathras! Study the old wars, Zathras has. Knows things that even Draal does not know yet. Zathras plans to keep it that way, too.

In studying war histories, I have found great many things about alien powers involved in many great wars. For example, the Ipsha and Grome had fleets before the Dilgar War. Zathras did not know this! Other empires in other galaxies have great fleets that they sent to war, too. Large ships, powerful ships. Zathras glad that he is safe on Epsilon 3 in service to Great Machine. The universe is filled with way too many powerful, death-dealing starships for Zathras' liking. Zathras mentions ships to funny Spathi captain and he runs and hides behind shelving units. Sigh. Then Zathras have to get him out with pointy stick. Zathras lead very sad life, but at least it is a safe life!

Not much more Zathras has to say. Been reading much about "New Earth Alliance" and how they will be destroyed by crazy aliens. Zathras does not understand it, but Zathras enjoys it anyway. Always enjoying the readings and the knowings of past things that Zathrad did not know about before.

Draal calls for Zathras, so Zathras must go! Here, read what Zathras has been reading. You be tellings Zathras what he missed later, yes?

**Zathras,**  
CARETAKER

# Contents

## 3 Campaigns

An introduction to this first part of two Campaign-themed issues of GM.

## 4 Bin'Tak vs. Octurion

Planetside Forum denizens discuss the strengths and flaws of these two famous Narn and Centauri warships.

## 8 VBAM Babylon 5 Campaign Diaries

Notes on the two campaign VBAM B5 campaign diaries included with this issue.

## 9 Early Fleets Expanded

From Tyrel Lohr's VBAM campaign, the Ipsha and Grome have their early fleets expanded to give players more options when playing in a pre-Dilgar War period.

## 12 The Antarean Legacy

Robert Balsey takes a crack at fleshing out the Centauri's antispinward neighbors.

## 16 Narn R'Koth Light Cruiser

## 19 Development of the Drazi Swallow Carriers

## 22 Escape Velocity: Nova

## 26 Dune Wars: Ships of the Million Worlds

## 34 Back to Nexus

## 39 Federation Warship Voyager

## 44 Next Issue





## The First of Two Campaign Issues

*Introduction by Tyrel Lohr*

### Introduction

This issue we begin the first of a two-part issue that will focus on campaigns, including both campaign rules and additional forces to make certain empires more viable in a campaign environment.

Why do people play strategic campaigns in tandem with their tactical game systems? In most cases, it comes down to the players wanting to experience a more epic confrontation in which they control all facets of an empire. Pick-up games are fun but campaign play puts the players in a position to be more emotionally invested in their battles, which can make the experience both more enjoyable and

memorable than if they had just played a series of stand-alone games.

Choosing to run a campaign represents a major investment of time and energy, both by the game master and his or her players. Once the decision to run a campaign has been made, the game master must decide which set of campaign rules will be used to run the campaign. In Part Two of the Campaign issue, we will give an update on the leading campaign systems for use with the Babylon 5 Wars game system: Bandit's Campaign Systems and the Victory by Any Means Campaign Guide.

With rules in hand, it is then a case of trying to make the various factions the players want to play in the campaign viable. This typically entails making sure that each of them has a wide enough variety of unit types available for purchase. Most importantly, the game master

wants to make sure that each of the players has access to basic units that are often required for campaign play: scouts, explorers, assault ships, and military supply ships, just to name a few. Players need options when purchasing new construction. Without variety and units to properly fill their order of battle, the players will have limited selections that they will tire of as time goes by. For example, take a player who wishes to play the Mitoc in a campaign? With only one ship type available, the player will be at a major disadvantage, lacking the flexibility or options of rival empires.

In this issue, players and game masters alike will find a number of new units intended to fill out the ranks of existing factions, helping to make them more playable in campaign situations.

\* \* \*

## BIN'TAK vs. OCTURION

### Deadly Dreadnought, Boastful Battleship

#### Introduction

Recently on the Planetside Forums, players revived the age-old debate that over the relationship between the Bin'Tak and the Octurion. Ever since Second Edition dropped the Twin Array's range penalty from -1 per hex to -2 per hex, there has been a divisive conflict in the player community as to the merits of the changes AOG made to the Narn and Centauri flagship designs. The Bin'Tak Dreadnought was always feared (and still is, leading to claims that the ship is underpointed), but the Octurion Battleship had its effectiveness dulled and its point value increased.

This article attempts to congeal some of the player comments generated on the Forums and put all of the information in one spot for review and consideration.

#### The Bin'Tak Dreadnought

*I think the Bin'Tak's big guns on the forward structure should be more powerful since they are bigger than the guns of the G'Quan. Maybe a kind of mega-laser cannon whose damage is bigger than the heavy laser but smaller than the heavy particle cannon? - Kainer*

The "bigger lasers" topic is something that has come up before in regards to both the Bin'Tak Dreadnought and the G'Quan Heavy Cruiser. For thematic reasons, a desire for bigger, meaner heavy laser cannons is certainly appropriate.

Putting larger heavy lasers

players feel that the Bin'Tak is undervalued as it is and does not necessarily *need* to be improved any more than it already is.

Along with the "bigger lasers" improvement idea, discussion of the Bin'Tak Dreadnought led to another, alternative upgrade option which is far more invasive. Steve Cross proposed removing the Bin'Tak's Light Pulse Cannons and replacing them with Medium Pulse Cannons, with two on the port side and two on the starboard side.

#### The Octurion Battleship

*Currently the Big O is the worst value for the buck among all the dreadnoughts - while I hear it was a terror in the first version with its Twin Arrays firing at -1/hex, it doesn't excel at anything in the 2nd edition - especially with a relatively stagnant weapons suite compared to other races. - Demiurge*

The Second Edition Octurion is a oft forgotten piece of the Centauri order of battle, largely because of the point cost increase it received. For some players the base Octurion is "good enough" and representative of the Centauri fleet doctrine. If a change is necessary, these players recommend a point

(Continued on Page 7)





# Jeremy Ward's Take on the Ocuturion Battleship

Let's look at the Centauri design pool. The Primus mounts 8 twin arrays and 4 Battle Lasers for 830 points, and is the mainline Centauri cruiser. She carries 12 fighters for organic support, but the Centauri also maintain a number of fleet carriers for devoted fighter coverage as well (Balvarin, 36 fighters, Amar Fast Carrier, 12 fighters, Darmoti Escort, 6 fighters) and used to deploy fighters in even larger numbers using the Sakar Carrier (48). The Centauri "light" or devoted cruiser hull, the Centurion, has no devoted fighter support, but supplements its BL batteries with a pair of matter cannons in the place of integral fighter support. The Ocuturion seems to be designed to meet both needs, as it carries double the amount of fighters the Primus does, but has 50% more firepower in twin arrays and 200% more in matter cannons than either the Primus or the Centurion (200% more in twin arrays over the Centurion). However, her long range power is no more potent than that of a Primus. That is just silly. The Bin Tak has twice the amount of long-range weaponry a G'Quan mounts in medium weaponry, and three times that amount in heavy weapons, and it is 300 points cheaper than the Ocuturion!. All of those matter cannons don't mean squat if you get killed by heavy laser or ballistic fire. So, that's why I proposed the above.

The Ocuturion is designed to

kill things quickly, like any dreadnought, and provides its own integral fighter coverage. In addition, NO Centauri design mounts heavy weapons in the rear, so why does the Ocuturion? The current versions of Centurion, the Primus, and the Ocuturion came out at the same time in Centauri ship design. The EA, the Narn, most of the League races (with the notable exception of the Hyach Dreadnought, but that's another topic), all of whom developing spaceflight much later than the Centauri, outgun the Ocuturion and are the same cost or cheaper. Given the fact that the Centauri got their collective whines into some actual action and began to conquer the Narn and others, the Ocuturion is not going to sit and rot while the rest of the fleet is upgraded or developed. For a War of Retribution refit, move the rear firing lasers to the sides, which gives you 3 lasers on each side, and keeps with the broadside weave arrangement favored by Centauri capital ships. Remove 4 of the matter cannons and replace them with 2 additional battle lasers, and mount them to the sides as well. That gives you 4 BLs on each side, which is double the amount a Primus carries. Rip out the rear mounted matter cannons and move them to the front arcs, or replace them with one heavy array facing forward for greater short-range punch, or two assault lasers. Then the ship is truly worthy of the resurgent Lion of the galaxy.

\* \* \*

# Liburdi's Counterpoint

Oh God, not this again. Probably the second most common Fanhead complaint after the whole "Centauri don't use lasers in the show" debate.

Ok, the simple version is this: Centauri do NOT use thier capital ships as brawlers. That's what all those wolfpack HCVs and MCVs are for. Try to use an Ocuturion like a Bin'Tak or a Nova, and you shouldn't be surprised when it preforms less than stellar in a role for which it was not designed.

What the Ocuturion does do well is act as an anchor for a larger Centauri fleet. It is certainly one of the best sniping vessels of all the younger races. All those complaining about the rear mounted BLs seem to miss the fact that, with a little zigging and zagging, you can easily put 3 BL shots downrange on a target every two out of three turns. And those MCs that some want to replace with assault lasers? Not only do they provide more effective mid-range firepower than ALs, but they provide lots of extra power which, along with shutting off a number of TAs, helps you get 13-14 sensor power for BL sniping.

Above all else, keep in mind that the Ocuturion is a CENTAURI vessel. And every decent Fanhead knows that the CRN ship design does not focus on Crunch power like the EA or Pak'ma'ra, but on the concept of "slow and steady wins the race". Centauri tactics rely on multiple strikes to cripple/kill an enemy, usually coordinated from a multi-vessel formation. CRN tactics are about maneuver warfare, and the Ocuturion is merely the equivalent of super space artillery. Use as

directed, and it works just fine IMHO.

## Rear Mounted Weapons

There are two main reasons why a BB has weapons facing aft. The first could be tradition, as a number of Orieni-era capships feature rear mounted guns. As you noted, current hull design seems to have moved away from this style, so I'm willing to discount it.

A more powerful reason for the rear mounted BLs, however, is the nature of the Octurion and just about every other BB in the game: they are big, slow, and ungainly. To compensate for a lack of maneuvering, virtually all BBs and DNs in the game have some amount of heavy weapons covering their aft arc. After all, do you think a fast attack HCV or MCV going for a pot-shot on the Octy's aft is REALLY going to feel threatened by a couple of MCs and some TAs? The BLs are there not only to cover a blind spot, but thanks to the usually excellent Centauri firing arcs can also be used to engage enemies in front with some simple maneuvering.

## Lack of Mainline Firepower

Frankly, I did adress this point. To reiterate, Centauri vessels are NOT about crunch power. You want a super-sniper vessel capable of wasting enemy Capships with a single salvo? You can go ahead and create one, but don't make it a Fanhead ship. The Octurion is well designed to support CRN doctrine, which is to act as a part of a larger formation of other Centauri capships. As I said before, if what you want is BBs and DNs capable of centerlining a target and blowing it away in one go, play Narn or Earthforce.

Removing the MCs for more

BLs is actually a bad idea in my experience, because the MCs have a force-multiplier effect for the formation as a whole. If I was flying against a formation of Premii, I could count on the fact that they have long-range punch, short-range punch, but no decent firepower in the medium range band (Yes BLs can hit a target at medium range, but have cycle time issues to contend with). The Octy fills this gap rather nicely, complementing the squadron as a whole.

## Matter Cannons vs Assault Lasers

I've heard no shortage of people who claim that all MCs should be replaced by ALs, which are often favoured due to their greater range. Frankly, I love my Matter Cannons, and I wouldn't trade them for ALs any day of the week.

Sure the AL can hit farther, but it is still a pretty crappy laser by "modern" standards. Averaging at 19.5 damage IIRC, you get barely two full rakes, and the chances are good they won't be in the same area so that armor counts as full against both hits. So against a foe with decent armor, the actual damage might be as much as half the original. I'm not exactly feeling the threat here.

On the other hand, we have the more modern Matter Cannon. While the range is less, I prize them because they can do things that lasers can't. They average 13 damage per hit, but unless you're fighting Ancients there isn't a single point that's lost to armor plating (and if you ARE fighting Ancients, then MCs are still infinitely more useful than ALs). What's really nice about them is all that damage comes in one big block, which makes them a great first strike weapon. If I've got a

Centauri ship in with MCs in effective range I'll always resolve them first before any laser hits, because these puppies will do wonders for stripping off all those lovely non-rakeable systems that just fritter away your laser power. If you've ever had to fight someone like the Minbari with the Fanheads, you'll see right quick just how invaluable this is.

And of course, if you're really lucky and get a primary hit, then matter weapons really start to shine. While an AL rake won't do much more than cause minor damage to most primary systems, an MC hit will likely severely damage or destroy it outright, possibly crippling the entire enemy vessel in the process. While too random to ever be considered a reliable tactic, it is nonetheless a point in favour of the MC.

Last but not least, I great frustration with the TA's lack of range helped me to discover a new use for MCs as flak guns. Many a heavy fighter jock who thought himself at a safe distance has been violently proven wrong when massed MC fire tore his flight to shreds. Great stuff, I tell you.

For all those reasons and the ones previously mentioned, I still contend that the Octurion is just fine as is.

\* \* \*

(Continued from Page 4)

cost drop for the Octurion, placing it in the 1200 combat point range.

Other player recommendations are far more sweeping, ranging from weapon replacements to wholesale modification of the base hull. Some of the options discussed were:

- Remove the ship's Matter Cannons, replacing them with either Assault Lasers or Heavy Particle Beams.
- Returning the ship's Twin Arrays to their First Edition -1 per hex range penalty, and possibly even giving these arrays their First Edition 8-structure systems.
- Increase the number of Battle Lasers on the ship.

## Conclusion

Do we really need upgraded or improved dreadnoughts for the Narn and Centauri? No, not really. But hopefully the exercise of imagining these improvements will give us a better idea of where their individual strengths really lie. It also gives players more ideas for different, possibly better ways for the Bin'Tak and Octurion to be portrayed in the B5W game system.

\* \* \*

## The Primus Laser Debate: Notes from the FAQ

In talking about any Centauri ship, the Primus Laser Debate usually rears its ugly head. Below are quotations from the Babylon 5 Wars Mailing List FAQ that concern the battle between whether or not the Centauri should have Battle Lasers and other raking laser weapon. These citations were posted by Rainer Graber to point out Agents of Gaming's reasons for giving Battle Lasers and other weaponry to the Centauri during the initial design process.

"Finally, I would also like to point out that arguing that the weapons on the Primus are not correct is in truth a losing proposition. Sometime ago we created a ship, specifically because of arguments from this newsgroup, to more closely ape the ship as seen in the show. It is the Secundus. As we had not seen it fire the lasers, we removed them, and replaced them and some TAs with the heavy arrays. As no fighter was ever seen with these ships, we also removed the fighters. In both cases that are generally sited from the show, the Centauri ship was going to be boarding enemy vessels. Thus, we made it an assault ship and added the assault shuttles and the ability to carry breaching pods. The Primus is simply the original version of this ship. If the argument is going to extend to all Centauri lasers I will say I see absolutely no basis for this argument. Nearly every race utilises one sort of laser or laser-type weapon or another as their long range firepower. The only exceptions I can think of are the Pak'Ma'Ra, Drazi and Vree who each have their own specialised weapon systems. There is simply no weapon that is better for long range firepower. It only makes logical sense for the Centauri to utilise a good long range laser to complement their excellent sensor suites." (Robert Glass)

"I have a wireframe of the Primus battlecruiser that clearly shows two long, thin gun barrels under each wing. The laser emplacements on the Narn ships are long and thin there by indicating that this a standard configuration for a laser weapon. All pulse weapons are short and stubby. The only exception to this rule is the Earth heavy laser. Even it, though is longer than their SPBs. Minbari neutron lasers further point to long thin weapon systems being laser-type weapons. The Narn stole most of their technology from the Centauri. In some cases, they re-engineered them to something more to their liking. Thus, the heavy laser from the battle laser." (Robert Glass)

"I have looked at the original drawings at the Babylonian Studios. On these drawings the four laser barrels are clearly shown and called out. This, of course, is the most overriding argument and was what I stated about them to several people originally when this argument was first broached." (Robert Glass)



## Victory by Any Means Babylon 5 Campaign Dairies

### Introduction

Several campaign dairies and fan-produced source materials are available on the VBAM YahooGroup (<http://games.groups.yahoo.com/group/VBAM/>). Among these are two Babylon 5 campaign dairies generated as the result of solo-campaigns. One of these dairies is written by Charlie Lewis from the perspective of the New Earth Alliance (NEA), while the other covers the galactic events from Tyrel Lohr's And the Sky Full of stars campaign.

As a note to readers, both of these campaigns use some rules that are not currently available to the general public. Rather, these solo campaigns were used as 'real world' playtests of upcoming rules slated for release in the Campaign Moderator's Companion.

### Charlie Lewis' B5 Campaign

Charlie's B5 campaign focuses on the adventures of the New Earth Alliance as they expanded outward from their homeworld. During the course of the campaign, the narrator – in the role

of the NEA admiral in charge of the fleet – has to deal with unruly commanders, alien invaders, and a host of other threats. Unfortunately, the appearance of a mighty foe forced Charlie to retire this campaign. The NEA was simply doomed by the discovery of this hostile enemy force on its borders.

Charlie tentatively plans on starting another B5 solo campaign after he completes his move, so we do have another great campaign diary to look forward to on the horizon! Charlie is also working on a B5W-to-VBAM conversion. He already has a wide variety of ships converted over and will be converting more as his new campaign takes shape.

### And the Sky Full of Stars

Tyrel's B5 campaign differs from Charlie's in that it doesn't focus on any one power. Instead, the campaign diary gives a general update on the goings on in the campaign. The campaign diary starts several years into the campaign's history, so readers join the campaign already in progress.

So far in the campaign, the EA, Minbari, Narn, Centauri, Drazi, Abbai, Ipsha, Dilgar, Grome, Cascor,

Mitoc, Alacans, Tuchanq, Krish, Enfil, and Vorlons are all active in the campaign. As the game continues, even more empires expected to be located.

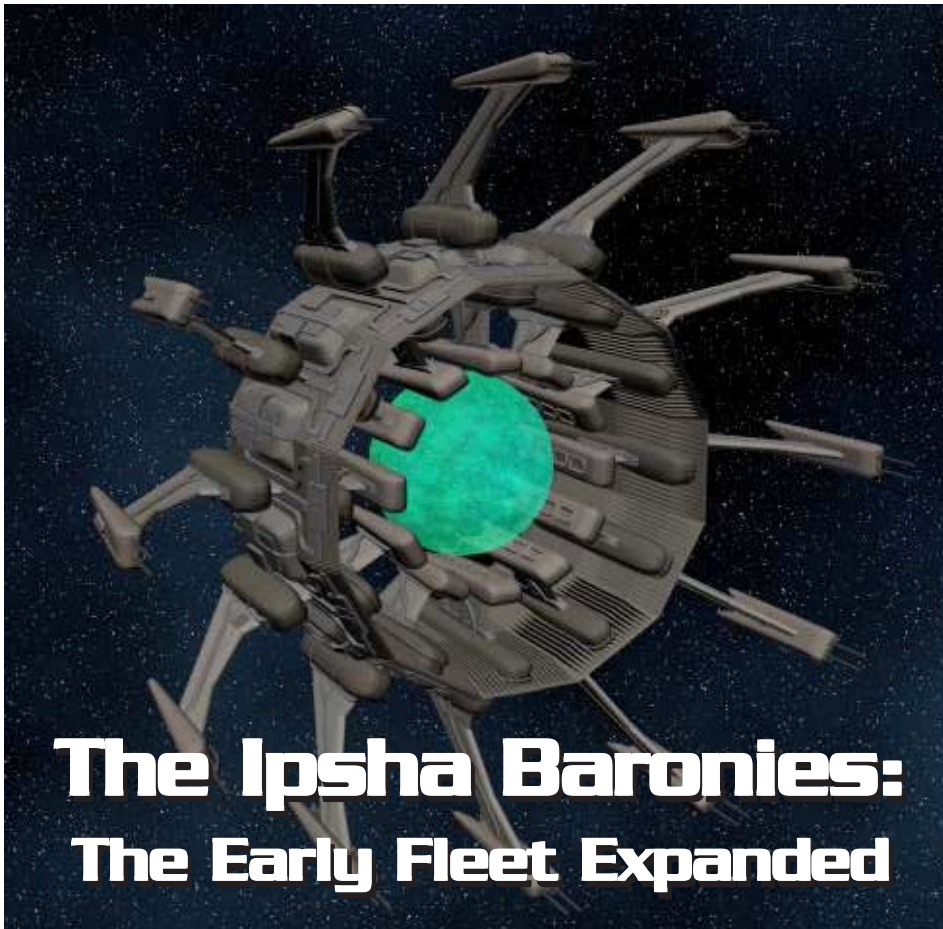
Tyrel has also created his own set of B5W->VBAM conversions. Both Charlie and Tyrel use the same basic Excel spreadsheet to arrive at their values, though both have modified it to fit their own conversion needs. Having two conversion sheets gives potential VBAM players options as to which of the two sets (or a mix of both) they want to play with – there is no perfect conversion!

### Other Dairies

Other campaign dairies, stories, or source packages are available at the VBAM YahooGroup. Players that are interested in VBAM, or campaign dairies in general, should check them out. For those of you who already have purchased a copy of VBAM, be sure to share your campaign stories – no matter the campaign system, campaign reports and dairies are some of the best fiction out there when it comes to the sci-fi genre.

\* \* \*





## The Ipsha Baronies: The Early Fleet Expanded

### Tarkalean's Pride: New Ipsha Units

*By Tyrel Lohr*

### Background

When the Ipsha Baronies appeared in the A Sky Full of Stars Campaign, I was initially confronted with a problem: a distinct lack of early fleet units! The campaign was in the early 2220s, and most of the Ipsha combat units did not come into service until 2226 or later. Rather than create entirely new units for the period, I instead opted to take the simpler road of creating "Early" models of some of the more vital fleet units. These units would fill the gap until the campaign (and Ipsha technical expertise) advanced to the

point that these new units could become available.

After reviewing the existing Ipsha ships, it seemed that the major technical advance common to the Ipsha ships developed during the late 2220s was the EM Pulsar. For this reason I decided to strip the Ipsha of this weapon before the initial appearance of the EM Pulsar on each ship's respective base hull. In place of the EM Pulsars, I chose to employ simple Surge Cannons. The reason for this stems largely from the fact that the PDFs I have for the Ipsha are only locally editable in Adobe Acrobat, not any of the versions of Illustrator that I own. As a result, my modifications had to be minor unless I wanted to either sit down and completely redo each ship control sheet or pester Mr. Punch for an Illustrator file of ship.

All of these ships are to be considered Common variants of their respective base hulls.

### Early Scout Wheel

In any exploration campaign, scout units are vital to the expansion and survival of an empire. So it was to my consternation that I found that the Ipsha Scout Wheel was not yet available to my Ipsha! In order to remedy this I created a weaker version of the ship, dubbing it the Early Scout Wheel (how creative!).

In VBAM terms, the Early Scout Wheel saw a reduction in its Defense, Anti-Ship, and Anti-Fighter values, but its Scout rating remained the same. With the B5W interpretation of those stats, I chose to decrease free thrust by 1 point, reduce the size of the reactor, and decrease the amount of available power. The jump delay was also increased, representing a slightly inferior jump engine.

### Early Carrier Cube

With the Narn/Ipsha War heating up, I really wanted the Ipsha to field some carriers and fighters to help hold back the Narn counteroffensive. As with other Ipsha ships, the Carrier Cube was inaccessible to the Ipsha due to its in-service date. So I created a new Carrier Cube – the Early Carrier Cube – to fill Baron Harpenn's desire for his Barony to field some starships of its own. The ship receives only a slight reduction in combat capability compared to the original Carrier Cube and carries the same number of fighters. The major alteration is its lack of EM Pulsar weaponry, exchanged for Surge Cannons. In this case, the addition of more Surge Cannons is not very helpful, since the overlap in weapon coverage is fairly minimal.

## Rhombus Escort Cruiser

Unlike the other Ipsha ships I have created, the Rhombus Escort Cruiser is a wholly new hull design meant to fill the gap between the Battlehex and the Tetraship and the Tetra Escort. The Rhombus is a “mini-Battleglobe” light cruiser design with a focus on escort duties. It is not especially effective in an anti-ship role and is instead meant to be used as a heavy escort to protect larger cruisers from harm.

Something players will undoubtedly find odd about the Rhombus is that it has been given two side-mounted Burst Beams. Among the official AOG Ipsha ships, none were equipped with Burst Beam weapons. To me the Ipsha seemed like the natural ship to be equipped with the Burst Beams, and would also help to go a long way towards explaining how the Narn got their hands on them. On an escort cruiser such as the Rhombus, Burst Beams are particularly useful in countering small enemy ships or fighters.

## Rhombus Masership

While designing the Rhombus Escort Cruiser, the idea popped into my head that creating a variant of my new Rhombus with Masers, provided by the Hyach during the Dilgar Invasion, would make for a very interesting ship design. The line of thought is that the Hyach decided to provide material assistance to the Ipsha Barony during the war by giving them Masers to adapt to their ships. The Ipsha Barony decided to try them out on the Rhombus hull and



decided that, though the ship was effective, it was not nearly as flexible as they would like. Reliance on Hyach technical assistance to maintain the Masers was also too much of an economic disadvantage for the Ipsha.

Is this ship a good idea? Probably not. It does however illustrate how the current Ipsha setup makes technology exchanges difficult to resolve. But I still think it should be an interesting potential warship in my campaign's far future.

## Toroid Base

The Toroid Base is the Ipsha's early base design in the campaign. Thus far they haven't opted to build any, but just letting them have the option to do so is nice. The intent is that the Toroid Base is sub-par compared to the later Ring Base. However, at first glance, astute players will realize that the Toroid Base SCS is based on the Ring Base SCS, so there are a lot of similarities!

The Toroid Base retains the Surge Cannon firepower of the original Ring Base, but loses all of the latter's EM Pulsar firepower. The pulsars are not replaced with Surge Cannons, either; this means that the Toroid Base has far less available firepower.

With the EM Pulsars removed, I decided that one of the Toroid's largest failings would be an inadequate energy reserve. I dropped the size of the reactor and also decreased the available power to reflect this. Hopefully the net effect is a base that is somewhat underpowered.

The structural integrity of the base also took a hit, with large tracts of structure, especially primary structure, being excised to get it to fit the VBAM CSCR unit statistics I had previously created for the base.

## Anemone Medium Fighter

The creation of a new medium fighter design for the Ipsha was more one of personal taste than anything else. Heavy fighters like the Urchin are all well and good, but in the campaign I thought it would be nice to give the Ipsha barons another option for projecting fighter firepower.

Anemone is a strong medium fighter, as good as some powers' heavy fighters. Anemones only have half the guns of the future Urchin Heavy Fighter, which does limit its capabilities. However the Anemone is still a good supplementary fighter, and still cheaper to build and maintain than the larger Urchin.

\* \* \*



# The Grome Autocracy: The Early Fleet Expanded

## Destroy All Humans! The Margus' Fleet

By Tyrel Lohr

### Introduction

As with the Ipsha, the Grome Autocracy is one of the many late-release factions in Babylon 5 Wars that is lacking a well-rounded fleet structure. For a campaign, there are some units that the Grome just don't have to fill holes in their order of battle.

### Magyor Electronics Cruiser

When the Grome were first contacted by the Earth Alliance in the campaign, I went looking for the Grome scout ship. By the end AOG had managed to get fairly standardized as to what each race had available to them (some would call borderline cookie cutter design, especially after the proliferation of Brakiri corporate scouts in Variants-4), so I expected to find some sort of a scout unit for the Grome. So I was surprised when I discovered that the Grome completely lacked any resembling a scout ship!

I got around this problem in the campaign by allowing the Grome to immediately purchase two Oracla-Alpha Explorers from the Earth Alliance for them to use to begin exploration of the areas near the Van Maanen system. Now that the EA and Grome are at war with each other, the Grome really need their own scout ship,

so I decided it was time to give them one of their own.

When beginning work on the Magyor, I decided that, in the spirit of high Grome tradition, the Magyor had to suck. Not just suck a little bit; no, the Magyor would have to suck really bad! So I gave the ship three sensor units – one primary along with one on each side. Each sensor unit is individually poor, and this is exacerbated by the Sensor Fluctuations Unreliable Ship Rule that I also applied to the ship. To top it all off, the Magyor only has Constrained ELINT, not full ELINT, so it is almost wholly inadequate for combat duties.

The armament of the Magyor Electronics Cruiser is not much better. They have four Railguns and four Flak Cannons in the usual arrangement, except that the aft Railgun is a keel mount and the only weapon the ship has in its aft quadrant. Again, this was a conscious effort to make sure that the Magyor would be typically a pretty poor choice for combat. It is

meant strictly as a fleet support unit, not as a mainline combatant.

Finally, I decided that the Magyor should carry a few more fighters than a traditional Grome warship. In converting the Grome over to VBAM, I found that they lacked any real fighter carriers in their fleet during the period. This has made Grome fighter deployment in the campaign difficult, restricting their use to planets and bases except for the token flight aboard each Mogorta Warship. By giving the Magyor capacity to base for two flights of fighters, the Grome now have a faux carrier for use in the time period.

### Tamgar Light Fighter

Because the Regla Light Fighter was not yet available in the time frame of the campaign, I invented a new Grome fighter, the Tamgar Light Fighter, so that my Grome could have something to fill their hangars. The Tamgar is essentially a stripped down, lower-tech model of the Regla. It has taken a hit in almost every meaningful statistic in order to create a decidedly inferior fighter, but one that is still acceptable in combating enemy forces in a pinch. Unfortunately for the Grome, their Light Slug Cannons only do two-thirds the damage of a full Slug Cannon, meaning these fighters are not going to be overly effective at dealing with enemy fighter craft.

\* \* \*





## The Antarean Legacy: Another Take on a Centauri Neighbor

### Antarean Ships and Technology

*By Robert Balsey*

### Antarean Ships

The Antarean's ships are graceful and fluid in motion and are very maneuverable for their size, which also makes them fragile (low structure).

Early in their development, the Antarean's used standard laser weaponry and Class-L Missile Racks on their ships and had very little in the way of defense. But in 2218 they discovered an old city on one of their worlds that had been established by the Kirishiac and later abandoned. From this city they were able to glean only the simplest of gravitic technology but over the years they

learned more and more.

Over the course of 22 years or so they were able to start production on their current defense force. Utilizing Specialized Gravitic principals and an improved laser and missile design, as well as the implementation of targeting lasers and computers built into their weapons, they were able to overcome their fleet's inherent weaknesses and become a force to be reckoned with.

### Tactical Weaponry

#### Tactical Lasers

Tactical Lasers are a fairly new development in Antarean technology. The Tactical Laser employs a laser/computer targeting system which gives it a slightly better fire control than other, basic laser weapons. At the same time it uses a secondary laser to track targets and a computer to utilize servos in the weapon mount (so the laser moves with the target after striking). This has the effect of striking the same location continuously, hence the standard damage instead of raking

like most laser weapons do.

The tracking system also excels at tracking lower speed incoming fire, such as ballistic type weapons, giving it a further -2 intercept rating.

### Tactical Warhead (Class T Missile Rack)

This flexible weapon employed by the Antareans is their only secondary weapon and one that gives them a much needed ballistic punch.

The launcher consists of a larger than normal missile rack and a laser tracking system.

The missiles are a different matter. Modular in design, they are larger than standard missiles with completely interchangeable components (hence the low cost). As such, each component is an add-on to the basic missile, slightly increasing its length. The laser guidance of the missile grants it an additional +1 OEW to the innate +3 OEW that all missiles receive.

The types of missiles available for the class T rack are as follows:

#### Tactical Warhead Chart

Type	Cost	Range	Damage	Spaces	Fire Control	Available
S	Free	20 hexes	20	1	+4	2200
L	3	30 hexes	20	2	+4	2210
F (flash)	3	20 hexes	20	2	+4	2210
H (heavy)	2	15 hexes	30	3	+4	2215
P (piercing)	8	20 hexes	30	2	+4	2240
A	Free	15 hexes	20	2	+7 (fighters only)	2210
M	12	15 hexes	60 (10, 6 times)	3	+4	2250



The range, category, or fire control does not include those of the rack. The spaces column is for the number of spaces the missile occupies in the rack.

## Reactive Structure

Reactive Structure is an all purpose defensive weapon consisting of a central control called an Orbital Control (Located in the Primary) and a network of small satellites that continuously orbit the ship, base, fighter or shuttle. The purpose of these Orbitals is to block incoming weapons fire so as to protect the relatively fragile units from harm.

In game terms, the unit will have a note in the Special Notes box of its ship control sheet labeled 'Reactive Structure' followed by two numbers. The first number indicates how many orbitals are able to be controlled by the ship's Orbital Control. The second number is the maximum size of orbital able to be used by the ship.

The orbitals come in 6 different sizes:

- 1) 2 blocks used by medium fighters and shuttles.
- 2) 4 blocks commonly used by heavy fighters
- 3) 9 blocks used primarily by HCV's and OSAT's
- 4) 12 blocks used by some specialty hulls and certain Escorts.
- 5) 16 blocks used by most capital ships
- 6) And 20 blocks used by specialty capital ships and Bases.

The number of orbitals and their armor vary by the class and purpose of the ship.

## Orbital Control

The Orbital Control is the

heart of the whole Reactive Structure system. Located in the primary section, it creates a gravity field around the ship which supports the orbitals. It also uses a battery of targeting lasers and low yield gravitic fields to detect incoming fire.

The number of blocks in the system represent control points. For each box of damage done to an orbital control system, it loses the control of one orbital. For critical hits, roll against the following chart:

### Orbital Control Critical Hits

1-15: No Effect

16-20: Roll a d6 every time an orbital is used on a 5 or 6 the orbital misses its target and the ship takes the hit.

21+: Burn out as the jammer critical hit (again, time to run!).

If the Orbital Control is destroyed, the ship can no longer support orbitals and should retreat (if the player is smart).

## Using Orbitals

Just after to-hits are rolled, but before location and damage are rolled, the Antarean player decides which shots will be blocked by an orbital. Orbitals can block any number of shots coming from one ship but two orbitals cant block the same shot unless it is already broken into sub-volleys (Pulse Mode).

**Raking** weapons striking an orbital roll their damage then the orbital takes it as a standard hit. Any damage left is then split into 10 point sub-volleys as normal.

**Piercing** mode is treated the same as raking. The full volley hits the orbital then what is left is divided

**Flash** mode is the most dangerous to the Antarean's because it has the potential to

damage all of the orbitals. The orbital that blocks a flash hit takes the full force of the hit, but all overkill is lost. However the ship also takes 1/4 the damage as do all the other orbitals. Flash weapons such as Narn energy mines cannot be blocked by orbitals, but the orbitals still take the listed damage (so one lucky hit with an E-mine could destroy them all).

**Sustained** mode is slightly different than raking in that on the second turn another orbital can fly into the path of the sustained shot, greatly mitigating the affect of sustained shots. Otherwise, sustained weapons fire is treated the same as a raking shot.

**Linked weapons**, such as those on fighters, are treated just as if they hit a system on the ship. If the orbital they hit is destroyed on the first shot, then the second linked shot is also lost due to them hitting at the same time (e.g., linked weapons score no overkill). **Matter** weapons operate in the same way (no overkill).

It should be noted that Antarean fighters are probably the most dangerous fighters of any power in the region because they each have two orbitals. This makes going up against them with other fighters risky at best. Enemy fighters could hit two times in a row and still not damage the Antarean fighters! However, after the fighters' orbitals are destroyed the Antarean fighter will fall soon thereafter, because the Antarean heavy fighter only has 9 structure and the medium 5.

Fighter weapons are not powerful enough to destroy ship sized orbitals (9 hits or more). When all of the orbital's structure is depleted from a fighter attack, any further hits are still lost due to the orbital being *Husked*.

Husked orbitals are

considered to remain in play until the end of the turn, after which they drift away due to insufficient mass for the gravity field to maintain them.

All Antarean Shuttles have a single 2 block orbital with 1 armor.

## Orbital Constructors

The orbital constructors are giant gravitic engines which create intense gravitic fields that draw in stray matter in space (space dust, small asteroids etc..) and compact it around a Tylum core. In the allotted time they create the orbitals the Antarean's use for defense. The rate in which they take to create Orbitals is a factor of size and is listed on the constructing unit's particular SCS.

There are two types of orbital constructors. The first is only located on stations and are the fastest at making orbitals and have a deployment range of 5 hexes. The second is a capital ship sized constructor which are slower but mobile for long range military campaigns, but only a 1 hex deployment range. Orbital deployment is done during the hangar operations step.

Ships or bases that have constructors usually have a greater

than normal control number because they may store a few orbitals for other vessels in addition to their own. However they are still only able to control a number of orbitals equal to the number of blocks in their control system for their own defense. For ships without a control system, the Orbital constructor itself can be used as a control system, but if this is done it will slow the creation rate of new orbitals for that constructor by 1 step ( $2/\text{turn} = 1/\text{turn}$ ,  $1/\text{turn} = \frac{1}{2} \text{ turns}$  and so on) and the total amount of orbitals that can be used in defense becomes  $1/3$  of the blocks in the constructor, dropping fractions.

Critical hits for constructors are as follows:

### Orbital Constructor Critical Hits

1-10: No Effect

11-19: Reduce construction rate by 1 step.

20-28: Only 9 hits or less orbitals can be created

29+: Apply effects of both 11-19 and 20-28.



## “Another Interesting Change for E-Mines in A Call to Arms” Editors’ Note:

After ‘going to press’ with Issue 13 “A Call to Arms,” Mongoose Publishing contacted us to inform us that some of the text used in the *Another Interesting Change for E-Mines in A Call to Arms* article was in fact verbatim, copywritten text from one of their recent game supplements. We were unaware that this text, which came from the b5wars.net forums, was in fact illegally reproduced.

After receiving Mongoose’s request, we immediately removed the offending article from the issue.

*The Great Machine* does not condone copyright infringement and we would encourage our readers to be careful of what they post to forums and other online discussion areas.

As a result of this incident, we will no longer be publishing articles that are not directly submitted to us, and if there is any question about the status of rules or text we will doublecheck with outside contacts before we include the possibly offending text in an issue of *The Great Machine*.

Finally, we would like to thank Mongoose Publishing for pointing out the mistake and being considerate during the process of its removal.





# The Antarean Fleet

## Bases and O.S.A.T.'s

### Hylos Defender O.S.A.T.

(Base Hull — Unlimited Deployment)

The Hylos is the Antarean's primary planetary defence platform. Designed primarily for use around planets in antarean controled space,

It's rarely seen out side of the antarean system due to the fact that it's a manned satellite. Unlike most OSAT's the Hylos has a C&C loaction. Because it's not an automated satellite and requires a crew. The C&C Icon represents the crew's living quarters as well as the command and control center for the OSAT.

### Kyloktar Battlestation

(Base Hull — Unlimited Deployment)

The key to all of the Antarean's home system defence. There are 24 of these stations located through out Antarean space. Used primarily as a support platform for the Antarean Fleet its never placed in a system without several Hylos to guard it as well as a sizeable defence fleet protecting its perimeter. The Kyloktar is highly prized for its ability to rapidly deploy Reactive Structure orbitals to support a fleet engagement in Antarean controled space , without them the Antarean's would be in trouble should an invasion happen.

## Capital Ships

### Cyrex Heavy Carrier

(Base Hull — Unlimited Deployment)

The center pice of any Antarean fleet. The Cyrex heavy carrier is capable of delivering a staggering amount of Fyrell or Zykell fighters into battle and then using it's limited defenses for additional support to the fleet. Originally the Antareans used their primary warships for the roll of carriers but certain developments in Combat strategys indicated that a dedicated carrier was needed and so the Cyrex was born . A variant is in the works for the Cyrex using an Orbital Constructor in place of the Medium Tactical Lasers and the Class T racks. This would enable it to better support its compliment of fighters by replacing the much needed Reactive Structure Orbitals the Antarean fighters depend on.

### Dymeucht Battlecruiser

(Base Hull — Unlimited Deployment)

The Dymeucht Battlecruiser is the Antarean's sole Heavy Cruiser its used in a fleet support role as sort of a light dreadnaught or battleship would be however its not limited as most such ships are because of the sheer number of these ships the Antarean's are currently opperating

Loaded with a staggering amount of firepower as well as a dozen fighters its one of the few Antarean ships capable of destroying a ship out right.

### Dytix Gunship

(Dymeucht Hull — Uncommon Variant)

This variant of the Dymeucht was concieved to destroy enemy supply lines operating in pairs with a standard Dymeucht Battlecruiser. The pair would jump in using one Jump

engine then using the other to leave. Using this strategy the antarean's were able to effectively disrupt an enemys supply lines for long periods allowing them to win battles consistantly. The Dytix is a standard Dymeucht stripped of its ballistic fire and some of its defensive weapons in favor of more direct laser firepower. Designed to destroy or severely damage several freighters at once the Dytix is unequaled in the Antarean fleet for its sheer firepower. however its limited defensive and ballistic weaponry make it of limited use in small engagements due to the fact that it must be supported by another vessel or fighters. when used in fleet battles for additional firepower (traditional for a gunship) its never without an escort of fighters or ships.

### Orbital Constructor Ship

(Base Hull — Limited Deployment)

This ship is the key to the Antareans ability to prolong engagements its ability to renew the Reactive structure that the Antarean fleet relays on makes this a very high priority target in battle. armed with only light weaponry and being the slowest and least maneuverable of the fleet its only used in larger engagments and is never found alone without support.

### Sylik Scout Cruiser

(Base Hull — Limited Deployment)

The only ELINT vessel in use by the Antarean's. The Sylik is a more than capable scout able to go very long periods of time without support.

Due to the expensive nature of the design not many were built and are a bit less common than the standard cruiser.

Well armed for a scout class vessel the Sylik can fill several

different roles in a fleet or it could function as a lone long range scout. Its fighter compliment allows it to fill either role very well.

## Heavy Combat Vessels

### Lydiox Heavy Escort

**(Base Hull — Unlimited Deployment)**

Originally developed to combat light vessels and fighter wings the Lydiox is a potent vessel able to fill several roles on the field of battle

Its Many Tactical Lasers makes it almost a gunship classification but its used primarily as an escort vessel but has recently become more of a front line unit lending its firepower in limited engagements against light cruisers and the like.

A variant of the Lydiox is in the works to make an Assault craft Increasing the hangar size to accomodate several assault shuttles and removing the forward 4 M.T. lasers and replacing them with 2 H. T. Lasers.

### Mytonic Missile Frigate

**(Base Hull — Limited Deployment)**

Designed as the Primary support element to the fleet next to the Cyrex. The Mytonic is a lightly defended missile platform. Its five Tactical launchers are a much valued addition to the fleet, however its limited Ammunition storage makes it a short term vessel (due to the lack of reload racks)and makes it a logistics nightmare to keep supplied in extended campaigns.

### Vyron Destroyer

**(Base Hull — Unlimited Deployment)**

The backbone of the fleet

this well rounded little vessel is an all round combatant and can be seen everywhere the Antareans are present

The first Antarean ship to utilize the new Reactive structure it has more orbitals than it can control and as such can only control 3 at a time.

## Medium and Light Combat Vessels

### Nylok Escort Destroyer

**(Base Hull — Unlimited Deployment)**

The Nylok is the first escort class vessel produced by the Antareans. Its a fairly tough little ship given its ability to control the larger orbitals and its firepower rivals most other medium ships (except perhaps the White Star).

### Ayalla Patrol Boats

**(Base Hull — Unlimited Deployment)**

The Ayalla was the first ship designed or even built by the Antareans. It used to be out fitted with Medium and Light Plasma weaponry and was used primarily as a planetary defender before the Hylos was in use. After the Hylos was created in sufficient numbers the Ayalla was all but forgotten. However in 2242 it was refitted for use as a system defender again , with the advent of the new Reactive structure and Tactical weapons. It has become a very effective combatant protecting many colonys from Centauri Assaults. In sufficient numbers they were discovered to be able to fight off just about any force wich is why they remain in service today . In 2245 they were outfitted with docking collars so they could dock and relieve the crews of the Hylos OSAT wich added even more value to them.

## Fighters and Shuttles

### Fyrell Heavy Fighter

**(Base Hull — Unlimited Deployment)**

The Second and much heavier fighter designed by the Antarean's. The Fyrell is unequaled in dogfighting due to its use of missiles and reactive structure. It has been produced in great amounts to compliment the fleet and serve as a protective force allong side of the Ayalla.

### Jylik Shuttle

**(+20 points per shuttle)**

The Jylik is a standard shuttle refitted with a single fighter weapon. In times of war it has been used as a military dignitary transport and as such can be purchased for any ship. Its single orbital and Ultralight Tactical Laser allows it to take a small part in military operations where the Antarean's are out numbered or out gunned.

### Zykell Medium Fighters

**(Base Hull — Unlimited Deployment)**

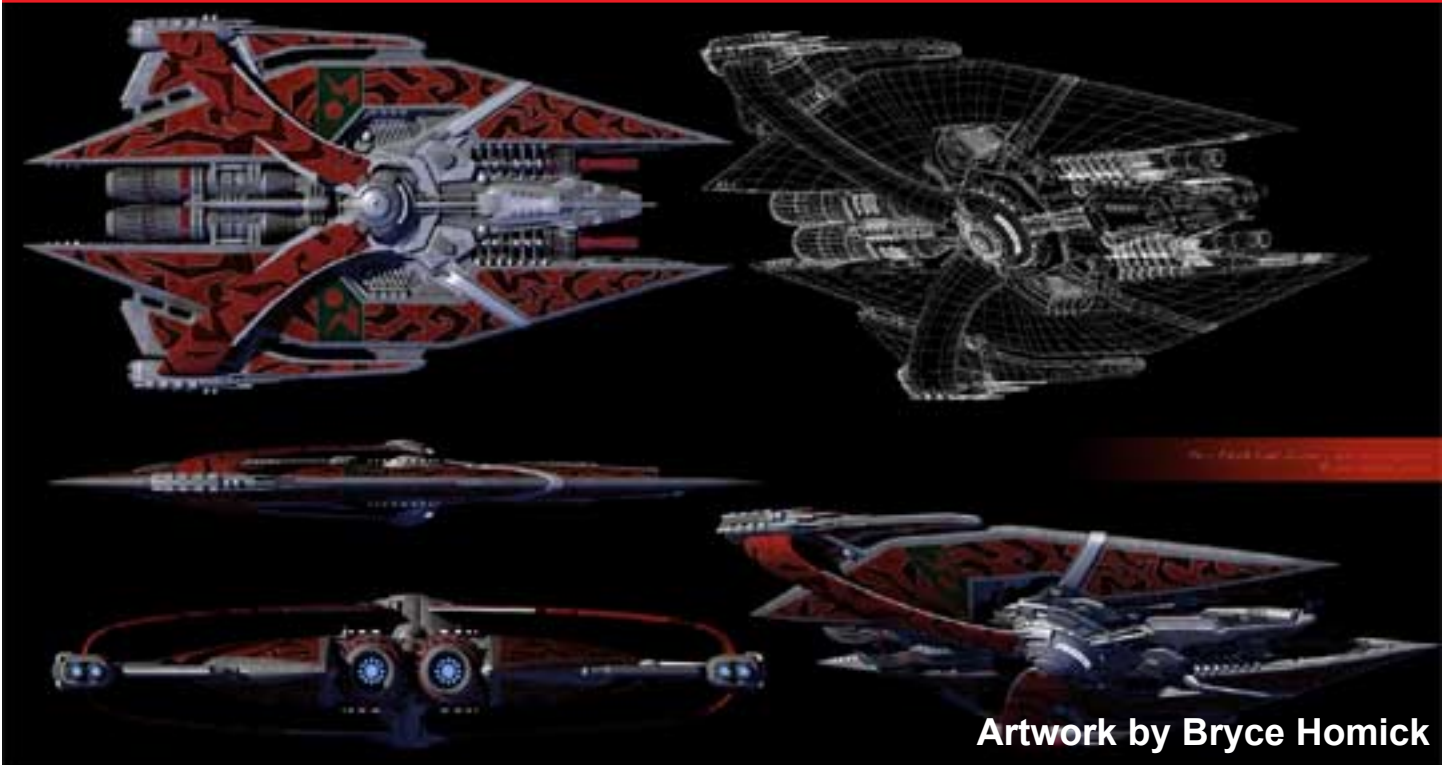
The first fighter produced by the Antarean's its role has fallen to that of the interceptor (with the advent of the Fyrell) at wich it excells at.

The greatest advantage of the Zykell or any Antarean fighter or shuttle is the use of the Reactive Structure which serves to make them almost invulnerable to fighter fire due to the linked weapons most fighters use.

\* \* \*



# NARN R'KOTH LIGHT CRUISER



Artwork by Bryce Homick

## Answering the Call to Battle: The R'Koth

By Adam Keane

### Introduction

Following the destruction of the majority of the Narn fleet at the hands of the Centari and Shadows in 2259 a group of engineers working under the occupation as slave laborers got together in secret and debated the reasoning for the loss.

The vast majority of their conclusions centered around the deficiencies of the *G'Quan* class heavy cruiser, especially those few cruisers who escaped the destruction of Narn only to be destroyed in the following months trying to strike back at Centari convoys. Designed in 2242 with the capacity to be upgraded when newer

larger weapons became available the design was heavily undergunned and incorporated vast amounts of excess space which weakened the superstructure and dramatically increased construction costs. Despite the arm-chair quarterbacking the group managed to develop a series of recommendations to improve the design.

With the withdraw of the Centari in 2261 from Narn these recommendation saw the light of day. While the *G'Quan* heavy cruiser would remain the backbone of the Narn fleet the high-command recognized the need for a lighter hyper-capable capital ship. One able to operate with little or no support and act as a commerce raider, preying on Centari convoys or leading light harassment fleets, as such the *R'Koth* class light cruiser was born.

The initial design called for a modified *G'Quan* hull 15% smaller while retaining the same weapons load. The hull reduction came from removing the outlying pylons and replacing the three main thrusters with two smaller units. However it soon became clear that the smaller hull could never support all of the systems originally called for while simultaneously improving the maneuverability over the *G'Quan* heavy cruiser. It was apparent that the large facilities required to support the full squadron of fighters would not fit without seriously weakening the structure; and that the additional thrusters needed for the increased maneuverability would cur into the rear firepower, requiring the loss of either the light pulse cannons or the twin arrays. Realizing that sacrifices would have to be made the design team and the consulting officers became divided into two schools of thought.

One felt that the fighter complement should be reduced to half a squadron, six fighters, and the two energy-mine launchers should be removed in addition to the two rear twin arrays. The thinking being that the loss of anti-fighter firepower would be offset by the increased maneuverability and fighter cover.

The second school of thought and the one that eventually won out called for the complete removal of the fighter capacity. They felt that the increased maneuverability would be wasted by having fighters and would be better utilized by direct-fire weapons as well as fearing they the fighters might have to be stranded in normal space far too often. This called for removing the two rear light pulse cannons while maintaining the two rear twin arrays to maximize anti-fighter defenses. The space gained by the removal of the fighters however was less than that required to mount the twin energy-mine launchers. A bitter feud developed on the design team as to the usefulness of mounting these systems on a raider. The final design decision was that the energy mine was the perfect system. The heavy lasers would be enough to ensure the destruction on any light or medium escort vessels, while common Centari convoy tactics involve the merchantman bunching up to ease the task of defending them. A single energy mine could guarantee the destruction of all but the heaviest cargo ships and force them to scatter where the effectiveness of their escorts would be degraded.

Following the construction of the prototype a strike mission against the a Centari convoy was planned. Intelligence told of a lightly escorted convoy bearing fuel and fighter munitions for the Centari 3<sup>rd</sup> fleet. The plan called for the *R'Koth* to

jump out just prior to the convoys arrival at the local jump gate, hit the convoy hard, destroying as much as possible and then escape before a heavy response could be mounted.

## SCENARIO SETUP

### FORCES:

**Narn** – The *R'Koth* light cruiser. Special e-mine rules from The Great Machine Issue No. 13 may be used.

**Centari** – Convoy: 2 Tankers, 1 Commercial Freighter, 2 Vorchan Warships. Weapons start charging on turn 1, no ships may ram.

### MAP:

A fixed map sheet is used.

### SETUP:

The Centari player designates any hex in the third row as containing the jump gate. The gate may be triggered at any time and next turn any ship that enters that hex is considered to have escaped to hyperspace, only one ship may escape per turn.

The Centari merchantman must be deployed within 1 hex of each other. The 2 escorts must be at least 3 hexes from the nearest merchantman and no less than 8 from each other. The nearest Centari vessel must be at least 20 hexes from the jump gate; all begin at speed 2. All Centari weapons begin uncharged and begin charging on turn 1.

The *R'Koth* exits hyperspace at the jump gate heading for the Centari convoy at speed 4. At the end of Turn 1, the Narn player must roll *d10*, this is the number of turns until Centari reinforcements are detected and the *R'Koth* must jump

to safety and the game ends.

### VICTORY CONDITIONS:

*Narn Major Victory* – All merchant ships destroyed, the *R'Koth* retreats.

*Narn Minor Victory* – 2 merchant ships destroyed, the *R'Koth* retreats.

*Draw* – 1 merchant ship destroyed, the *R'Koth* retreats.

*Centari Minor Victory* – 1 merchant ship destroyed, the *R'Koth's* is unable to retreat.

*Centari Major Victory* – 1 merchant ship destroyed, the *R'Koth* is destroyed.

### HISTORICAL OUTCOME:

The *R'Koth* came threw the jump gate much to the surprise of the convoy, its opening volley cored the nearest tanker, while a second tanker was lightly damaged by an energy mine that exploded off bow when it was forced to scatter. All ships increased speed and conducted a high speed run past each other where the second tanker was destroyed. The *R'Koth* suffered light damage and retreated to safety when sensors detected two flights of Senti medium fighters approaching. The Narn high command considered the test a success and ordered production on a limited number of *R'Koth* light cruisers.

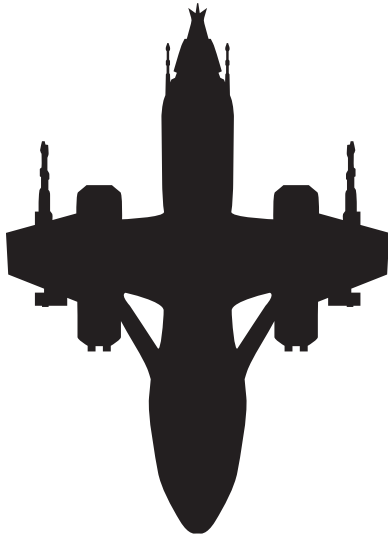
\* \* \*



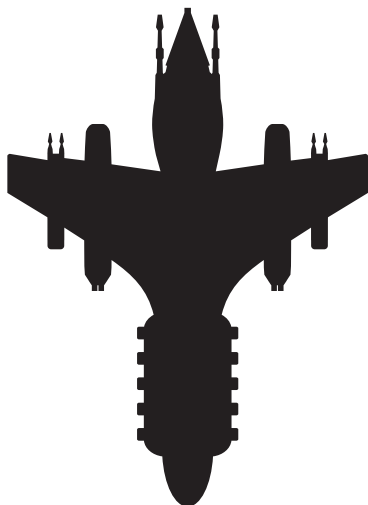
## Development History of the Drazi Swallow Carriers

### A Unveiling of new Drazi Carrier Unit

*By Tyrel Lohr*



Swallow Carrier



Peregrine Jump Ship



Shrike Destroyer

## Overview

In the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century, the Drazi began development on their first major carrier warship design. Prior to this period, the Drazi had relied solely on small or 'casual' carriers to provide fighter support for Drazi fleet operations. The established carrier philosophy within the Freehold navy was to maintain a single flight of fighters aboard larger cruiser vessels and otherwise rely on converted light carriers for all other fighter needs. The role of light carrier traditionally fell to contemporary destroyer classes. These ships were large enough to allow for successful conversion into light carriers capable of basing two flights of fighters. Both the Osprey and Shrike Destroyers saw limited conversion into light carriers, in 1588 and 1840 respectively.

For the early Drazi, this carrier doctrine adequately met their empire's fighter projection needs. Enough destroyer-size carriers vessels could be built to provide the necessary fighter strength to deal with limited threats. Drazi fighters tended to be light interceptors, so these carriers were most often committed to deployments where such fighters could do the most good. In confrontations with the Centauri, the Drazi quickly learned that their interceptor fighters were inferior to those fielded by the

Centauri Republic. Tempered by their past experiences, the Drazi Freehold opted to maintain a low-level fighter deployment program for an extended period of time.

A temporary shift in Drazi carrier doctrine took place in the 1960s. The rising power of Zhabar (at least in the eyes of the Freehold leadership) had spurred a rash of shipbuilding two decades before. This military buildup was intended to equalize the disparity between Drazi and Centauri military capabilities.

A convergence of several key technological advances occurred as a result of this build up to make the Drazi reconsider the fielding of a 'dedicated' fleet carrier unit. The first was the widespread deployment of the Peregrine Jump Ships. This was the first time in the Drazi's history that the Freehold had possessed the resources to produce capital ships in any great numbers. The number of Peregrines in service was still statistically small, but mass production provided many tangible advances in construction theory. The second contributing factor was the advanced age of the Shrike Destroyer and its light carrier variant. The Drazi overhauled the Shrike light carrier fleet in the 1940s, but

# Campaigns

they remained poorly armed vessels inadequate for the fleet combat duties that the Drazi admiralty saw on the horizon.

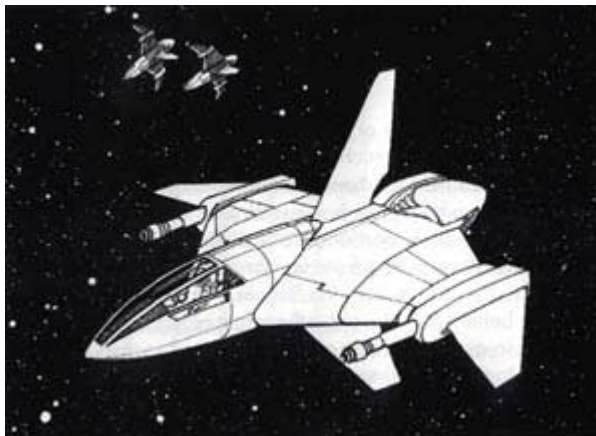
Despite major setbacks, a request for proposals for a major Drazi carrier class of capital ship size was let in 1954. Several major design firms submitted proposals. The contract was eventually awarded, in 1957, to the shipyard that already possessed the Peregrine contract. The firm's proposal had been accepted in large part due to its economic benefits. Their engineering team had heavily relied on existing design elements of the Peregrine Jump Ship in designing the new heavy carrier, to be designated the Swallow class carrier. By basing the Swallow on the Peregrine, the Drazi Freehold would be able to use many of the same factories and construction complexes already setup for construction of the jump cruiser, providing vital cost savings for the project. The decision to build a dedicated carrier was controversial, and the ability to build the ship on the cheap would be one of the only ways to get the ship from the prototype stage and into general construction.

The Swallow Carrier was of largely the same size and hull configuration as its spiritual brethren, the Peregrine Jump Ship. The class could base four flights of fighters, a first in the Drazi fleet. The Swallow's combat capabilities remained strong despite its large hangars. Two particle cannons, a repeater gun, and four standard particle beams rounded out the Swallow's armament.

Limited numbers of Swallow Carriers were ordered, eventually leading to a larger construction run

years later. The Swallow Carriers proved their worth in combat trials, especially when placed in command of Drazi light carrier squadrons. More importantly, the Swallows proved to be excellent escorts and freed up friendly fighters for defense of other fleet units.

Despite the ship's early successes, the Freehold remained unchanged in their position that newer, larger carriers were necessarily a good thing. For the cost, they still maintained that the many other lighter carrier variants in the fleet (both old and new) could meet the Drazi need for fighter



transport at a lower cost than the larger Swallows.

The Swallow fleet received an upgrade along with the rest of the fleet just before the Orieni War, bringing them up to par with the rest of the Drazi fleet of the period.

The fight to keep the Swallows in service hit a brick wall after the introduction of the War Talon and Strikebird carriers. The Drazi government was fed up with the Swallow Carriers and insisted that they begin to be converted into more direct combat-oriented roles. Begrudgingly, another generation of Drazi engineers took up the challenge of improving the combat strength of the base Swallow hull. The end result was the Storm

Swallow Combat Carrier. The ship exchanged a pair of standard particle beams for particle cannons. These new wing-mounted hardpoints provided a restricted firing arc but effectively doubled the ships' anti-ship firepower. Unfortunately, the additional of the two extra particle cannons placed extra stress on an already taxed reactor. Engineers were forced to permanently reroute power away from the engines to cover the power deficit. This produced a sluggish carrier that was little better in combat than its predecessor. There was some talk of scaling back or eliminating fighter capacity on the Swallow hull to compensate, but this idea was refused. What was the point of operating a dedicated carrier if it could not base any more fighters than a light carrier?

Further dismayed by the perceived flaws in the design, the entire Drazi Swallow Carrier fleet was retired by 2186. From time to time, the Drazi Freehold would reactivate the carriers for short field campaigns in which large numbers of fighters were necessary. However, at the end of each campaign, the Swallows and Storm Swallows inevitably found themselves back in ordinary at shipyards at Zhabar.

The last hurrah of the Swallow Carrier class came during the Dilgar War. The Drazi, in recognition of Dilgar fighter superiority, began reactivating their Swallow Carriers in 2229 to combat the Dilgar menace. Most were deployed as-is; the Drazi had little interest in upgrading the ships' systems, they only wanted the extra basing capacity the carriers offered.

A very limited number of Swallow Carriers received a series of impromptu hull upgrades intended

to make them more competitive and survivable in battle. These Barn Swallow Heavy Carriers received general upgrades to many ship systems, most notably a new electronics package, but the most controversial modification to the base Swallow hull was the stripping of the ship's secondary armament in favor of additional hangar facilities. This left the Barn Swallow Heavy Carriers unable to defend themselves from enemy fighter attacks. In exchange, the ship was able to carry an extra flight of light fighters. A fighter catapult was also added to allow the ship to dock a single super-heavy fighter.

The Barn Swallow Carrier proved to be an abject disappoint for the Drazis. The extra flight of fighters came at too high a cost to the Swallow's defense grid which could no longer adequately defend the carriers from rampaging dartfighters. After participating in only two battles, the Barn Swallow Carrier concept was shelved and conversions of additional members of the class were cancelled.

Following the end of the Dilgar War, the Drazis finally laid the Swallow Carriers to rest. For the Drazis, the Dilgar War had been the ultimate reinforcement of their distributed light carrier fighter deployment doctrine. Many smaller carriers were harder to neutralize than a handful of larger carrier units. The Swallows returned to mothballs, where they would stay until finally sold for scrap during the League Wars to counteract the Freehold's growing war debt.

Future Drazis carriers, such as the Nightfalcon Heavy Carrier, placed emphasis on

\* \* \*



## Letters from Mr. Gorn

Dear Flesh Monkeys,

Greetings! I'm continuing my amazing vacation of this planet you call Dirt. No, that's not right. *Earth*. Yes, Earth is what you call it! You should have called it Dirt, no reason to be confusing the tourists like this!

This postcard finds me visiting one of the many cultural heritage eating locations on your world. You so quaintly named it Dairy Queen, but I found no cattle or monarchs in the entire establishment! What a bummer deal, dude! Back on Gornar we believe in truth in advertising, so I had to give the establishment's manager a good talking to. Luckily he proved that Dairy Queen does indeed offer quality "smoothies"... hmmm... after a fashion, anyway!

I really have to say that this has been a good trip so far. I look forward to my next adventure on this quaint planet you call home (or Dirt, or whatever)!

Love, Always,

*Mr Gorn*

Mr. Gorn



# ESCAPE VELOCITY NOVA WARS!

## EV: Nova in the B5W Universe

*By Mark "Ramius" Dwinnells*

### Introduction

I converted the Starbridge, every normal Class and Modified version, from the sleeper hit

Escape Velocity: Nova. They ramp up in size and capabilities dramatically, so the upper end variants seem a very large bit powerful for their size. They're also pointed up to and over 1000, so I think it fits. Mostly.

Each needs a bit of review before I post their availability, but the general idea is that the first three common, the next uncommon, and the 4 and 5 common only in Rebel fleets of over 2,000 points (rare otherwise).

### New Weapon Rules

#### Pulse-Ammunition

Each time the weapon is fired, the maximum number on the

die plus the volley bonus received is marked off on the ammo track. The volley bonus only counts if it is actually giving one or more pulses in damage (e.g. not having enough to count for an extra pulse means that the volley bonus is counted as zero). This means that weapons that can hold off on fire generally do so in pitched battles, while short, brute skirmishes tend to have as much OEW as possible applied.

### New Weapons

#### Hellhound Missile

The bigger, deadlier brother of the radar missile, it packs a punch and hits from afar. Be wary of ships that mount more than one launcher.

#### Wraith Cannon

The primary Polaris secondary weapon, this fires charged Wraithii the size of softballs at fractional c velocity. The kinetic and contained energy makes this a dangerous weapon when loaded; it's drawbacks are that it is relatively weak in structure and limited ammunition. The Polaris lent the

design of the Wraith Cannon to the Rebels when they decided to give them the 'correct' plans on how to manufacture the Polaris Dragon. The weapon is molecular, but has no special properties (E.g Armor ignoring). This fires in a pulse mode.

#### Hail Chaingun

The main Auroran small arm, it's designed to be the counterpart to the Federation's Light Blaster. It can do as much, if not more damage than the Light Blaster, but runs low on munitions fast. To counter this, the can Aurorans set their guns to a lower cycling rate. This translates in-game to an option to not have a volley bonus. This is announced at the time of firing. A modified version can be found on fighters.

#### Raven Rocket

A blitz-fired weapon, this fires several small, unguided rockets at the target in an attempt to swarm it. This is represented in its Raking form of damage. It has been known to be mounted on all types of craft - even shuttles!

## Other Weapon Information

### Light Blaster

It's essentially the same idea as the SPB and its cohort weapons. Small, able and capable of doing damage more towards fighters and small craft, it's almost worthless against larger vessels unless employed in numbers. A modified version of this is on the Federation Viper.

### Medium Blaster

The primary anti-ship weapon of choice for the Federation, Neutral, Independant and Rebel ships in the EV:Nova universe, it's a decent all-around weapon. Its survivability in combat despite its low damage for its physical size makes it preferred to most Auroran weapons in 'civilized' space.

### Light Cannon

A fighter weapon modified for medium ship and LCV use, it's small size is offset by its rate of fire. Preferred to the point that it's the primary armament on the Lightning Fighter.

### Quad Light Blaster Turret

Physically ungainly and overly large for its small weapons return, it mounts four Lt Blasters for anti-fighter or antiballistic duty. Not preferred if it can be ripped out in place of a medium blaster or any other larger weapon, unless it's on a capital vessel.

### IR Missile

One of the oldest missile types, it's cheap, long-ranged, and light. It's also weak, stockpiled in numbers by the Federation, and

easily jammed. (End-result DEW (DEW- FC bonus= End-result) x2 vs. IR missiles).

### Radar Missile

Common since well before the New Century era, its existence has caused it to spread to most ends of the universe. The Aurorans prefer it to the IR missile due to its better payload and reliability, but it's also more expensive to manufacture. It is functionally similar to the S-Type missile and rack in B5Wars.

### Hellfire Missile

*(Not yet featured)*

The most dangerous of the Radar-guided missiles, it is the equivalent of a heavy-long missile in B5Wars. It needs a specialized rack to launch its overly large missile, but normal radar racks have been known to be retooled in emergencies. To test it out, it has a warhead strength of 32, range 35, RoF 1/2 turns, otherwise the same as a Radar Missile. Magazine criticals are particularly deadly to this rack's carrying vessel.

### Gravimetric Missile

One of the two feared missiles in stand-off warfare, it and its remote cousin, the Etheric Wake missile, follow the mass shadow of their target to its doom. It's virtually impossible to jam – in-game, that means nothing but First Ones may apply DEW or jammers of any sort against it. The production of the missile is extraordinarily cost-prohibitive for normal warfare, which is why it is seen on only a few vessels. Tragically, the rebels have been known to employ packs of Starbridges equipped with these to hunt specified targets in hit-and-run attacks.

### Etheric Wake Missile

*(Not yet featured)*

In a similar way to the Gravimetric Missile, this newer development from Gli-Tech-nia follows what has been dubbed an 'Etheric Wake' from certain types of drives to their target. If used against a non-EWake equipped ship, it relies upon a backup Radar system. EV makes distinctions between several different types of drives, so these won't be seen unless the Polaris are released, whom are the sole users of EWake drives, this missile's importance won't be readily noticeable.

### 100mm Railgun

The smallest of the railguns developed by the Aurorans, it's physically larger than the EA's preferred railgun. This is due in part to the Aurorans' preference for long range weapons in their centuries of spacefaring, and yet can still be found one or two at a time in the lighter escort-level Abominations now becoming common to the fleet.

### 150mm Railgun

*(Not Yet Featured)*

A midway point between the 100 and the almighty 200, the 150 sacrifices the larger one's firepower for the smaller one's refire and control capabilities. Its widespread deployment in the last two decades has seen it fitted to turrets and expanded mounts, much to the chagrin of Federation commanders. (Designer's note - 'Turret' refers to >180 degree rotation, as the Vree type turrets seem overkill)

### 200mm Railgun

Massive, powerful and slow to reload, the Aurorans' preferred



mainline weapon on their cruisers and carriers means business from afar and up close. Normally never seen on anything lighter than the Gjinchar subclass of cruiser, this terrifying weapon was imported in 1170 NC by Sigma Shipyards for undisclosed reasons. Three months later, the first Mod-E Starbridge rolled off the line, right next to an 1170-production IDA Frigate...

## Ships of EV: Nova

### Valkyrie Classes

**Class 1** - This is the original, designed some time ago to replace the aging Porsche Starscreamer. It's armed the lightest, and is the preferred fast transport/courier in the years preceding the Starbridge's release. It's major difference when compared to the 'bridge of the same role is that its power supply is nowhere near as exposed, but the cargo is more lightly armored and

the engines more sluggish on pickup.

**Class 2** - The next version of Valk, this was armed with the lightest weapons possible and economical. Just as Sigma Shipyards copied the evolution years later in their Starbridge, this is designed to be a fighter-killer when necessary to fend off the raiders that could keep up.

**Class 2 Auroran** - This modified Class 2 has seen some time on the fringes of 'civilized' space. Depending upon whom you consider civilized, that brings to mind the fronts between the Federation and the Aurorans, Rebels, and Polaris. To this end, many Valks have, over time, had their components damaged while on the borders, and had their weapons replaced with cheaper and easier to acquire components. The Hail Chaingun comes from Auroran space, and coupled with the fast-firing Light Cannon it has been argued to be a

better outfit for its purpose than the standard Class 2.

**Class 3** - The escort variant developed due to the rising Pirate acquisitions of Valks and their protectees, its armament has been known to give pause to Federation patrol boats on routine scanning missions. One Hellhound launcher, a pair of Raven Rocket launchers, two medium blasters, three light blasters and a QLB turret tend to intimidate most medium and small craft. They have been known to be used in packs to hunt down larger vessels with ease - something the Federation is concerned with ever since the original designer of the Class 3, ex-CEO of Sigma Shipyards Donald Chick, disappeared in the galactic northwest around the time the rebels 'acquired' old Valkyrie hulls.

**Class 4 - Rebel Only** - One of the more recent advances in the Valkyrie's design, the Class 4 is the reason that Pirates fear Rebel fleets. It has better range than most Auroran or Fed ships, mounting two 100mm Railguns and two Radar missile racks, and a pair of medium blasters up front for close-in work. It has a slight problem in its power supply, in that it needs more than is available. The Class 4's tend to work closely with the heavier Rebel starbridges, something ironic considering the economic status of both ships' manufacturers.

**Class 5** - The heaviest, deadliest and most feared Valkyrie not operated by Pirates, this model has the least resemblance to its earlier cousins. One 200mm railgun, a pair of 100's and medium blasters, and a forward and aft pair of QLB turrets, the normal armament would be rightly intimidating. The terrifying



part is when one considers the fact that it also mounts a Hellhound missile launcher and two Wraith Cannons developed by the mysterious Polaris. The only drawback is its overtaxed reactor, which is usually solved by alternating the need for blasters and Wraithii.

## Starbridge Classes

The **Class A**, the original designed in the 1160's NC (~3930 AD) was designed as a fast courier, light frieghter, or quick convoy escort. Its larger sibling, the one purchasable in-game in EV:Nova, is the **Class B**. It's armed more towards discouraging smaller pursuit craft roughly its own size and smaller, and to this end has several light blasters as opposed to two medium blasters.

The **Class C** is the first escort of the bunch, but the **Class D** is where the escort ideal truly starts to shine. Used in private convoy escorts for different corporations, the Class D is a known problem for pirates and enemy factions alike. It still has a modest cargo capacity, but is generally only used for 'last minute items' for the transport run.

The Mod C and Mod D are the heavily modified warship variants of the hull. Visually, there's no way they could be mistaken for their lighter cousins, as they mount military grade firepower focused to the forward quarter. QLB turrets for anti-fighter duty and mixes light weapons for an added punch, they pack either several medium blasters or a pair of 100mm railguns purchased from the Aurorans for

taking on larger targets than themselves.

The dreaded **Mod-E** is the most recent invention, and the Rebels stole the design shortly after the first production run. It mounts two 200mm railguns and a mix of lighter weaponry. It has been used repeatedly by the rebels as a way to tie up larger vessels, such as the Federation E-41 destroyer, due to its obvious threat level. Pirates are well advised to steer clear lest they seek an early grave.

*Legal Note: All original Escape Velocity:Nova material is the property of Ambrosia Software, ATMOS Inc. and the designers of EV:Nova. All I did was translate their vision into B5Wars.*

\* \* \*



*Michael Grant, JBCook*

ESCAPE VELOCITY  
**NOVA**

# Dune Wars

## Part 4

### - Ships of the Million Worlds -

#### The Spice Must Flow: Dune Wars Continued

By Christian Meador

#### Introduction

The ducal frigate took its assigned position inside the Heighliner's cavernous but crowded cargo bay. Nearby, shuttles full of passengers moved delicately into position, along with transports and cargo ships full of the trading goods of Caladan: pundi rice, medicinals from processed kelp, handmade tapestries, and preserved fish products. Privately owned lighters were still loading merchandise into the hold,

*ferrying up from the surface to the Heighliner. This huge guild ship had gone from world to world on its roundabout route to Kaitan, and the province-sized cargo bay was dotted with ships from other worlds in the Imperium, all on their way to the coronation... He watched two Tleilaxu transports take positions near the Atreides frigate. Beyond the transports a Harkonnen frigate hung in its Guild-assigned place.*

#### ***Dune, House Atreides***

The great Heighliners of the Spacing Guild move effortlessly through the stars, traveling from world to world, binding the Great Houses of the Imperium in a vast web of commerce and politics. While

it is true that the secrets of navigating the stellar void between star systems are known only to the Guild, the populace of the Million Worlds is well acquainted with space. Indeed, hundreds of space vessels flit around each world, as befits a civilization that has existed as space farers for over twenty thousand years. The timeframe of the novel *Dune* starts at 10019 by Guild Reckoning, but the first star empire of mankind existed ten thousand years before the start of the current calendar, dated from the ascendancy of the trinity of the Lion Throne of Corrino, the Spacing Guild, and the formation of the commercial giant CHOAM from the many houses of the Landsraad.

While the Guild Peace, enforced by their monopoly on space travel and the golden legions of the Sardaukar, has worked to prevent



strife and war spreading from the Siridar fiefs of the Houses to the space lanes themselves, the sheer size of the Imperium has prevented them from accounting for all possible threats. Unrest has come to the Million Worlds as its political institutions strive for control of the source of all things, the spice Melange. And while the Dukes, Counts and Barons of the aristocracy look to build their resources in terms of House Atomics, Mentat Masters of Assassins, and the legions of warriors, not an inconsiderable number wonder if the Spice becomes rare or its monopoly is broken what happens to the far flung worlds of the Imperium? So they gather their strength, and make their plans to find ways to subvert the Guild Peace should a rival chance interdiction and bring war to the stars.

Part IV of Dune Wars looks

at the plans made by several of the Great Factions of the Imperium, and introduces many new warships into the fold. The second section of this article includes more of the diverse weapons systems of the Million Worlds, from the antiquated Chain gun to the highly advanced Prism Lasgun.

## The House Atreides Naval Militia, service to Honor:

The Duchy of Caladan's noble house has long found its way among the conspiracy of rivals. In ancient history House Atreides acquitted themselves with bravery and honor in the formation of the Imperium, the Butlerian Jihad and especially the battle of Corrin. In the not too distant past they were peripherally involved in the war of assassins between House Ginaz and House Moritari. There are quite a few vassals of the house who remember the assassination of Duke Paulus, and the intrigues and battles that a young Duke Leto fought with the Bene Tleixalu, leading the invasion of Ix to restore his allies in House Vernius to the Throne.

Under Leto's rule the House has recruited many talented individuals, and with the learned advice of those such as Thurfir Hawatt and Gurney Halleck he has set up a naval plan in order to transform the House Militia into a tangible asset in times of war. This hidden strength of Atreides is never called for during Leto's life, but it helps Paul Atreides expand his power out through the galaxy when he assumes the throne of the Emperor.

## Guardian Rescue Ship

An old design and the mainstay of the Caladan militia, the Guardian ship is designed to aid and assist travelers among the far flung fiefdoms of House Atreides, especially in the asteroid mining areas near Caladan. With light armament for anti-piracy and anti-smuggling duties, its main function is to repair foundering ships, and in that role it excelled. It served a dual role in times of war, and with minimum refit time it could be turned into an Auxiliary Patrol Carrier. Note that the Guardian has a repair capability, and can repair other ships that it tractors during the course of a battle. While limited in scope, this ability proved useful on several occasions during the Great Jihad.

## Auxiliary Patrol Carrier

A much more robust variant of the Guardian, the Auxiliary Patrol Carrier was purposefully given a less than imposing designation in an attempt to hide its capabilities from military planners and the mentats of other houses. The core hull remained unchanged but reinforced, and the weapons it was outfitted utilized a new variant of the classic Vulcan railgun, using the targeting ability of the advanced Huffuf Oil Lens, greatly increasing its accuracy. The hangar bays are usually filled with the excellent Waveskimmer fighter, and its ability to project power with these superiority fighters are what eventually gave the Patrol carrier its excellent reputation. Finally the ship did keep some of its repair capability of its more common sister ship, but due to the military changes it lost its ability to repair any external ship, but often used those facilities to refit fighters at convenient pauses in the battle.



## Militia Torpedo Cutter

An LCV manned by loyal Atreides militia, the Torpedo Cutter was based on a civilian lighter design that emphasized speed and maneuverability. In its converted Militia role the vessel's weapons included two class-S missile racks, a Vulcan Railgun and two chainguns for point defense. Designed as an attack platform with limited defenses, it would be the ultimate representation of how free Atreides citizens paid back the beneficence of their Duke with loyalty and bravery.

## Waveskimmer Medium Fighter

The Atreides medium fighter, it was designed as a space superiority platform. The strength of the design is the concentric band Holtzman shield, giving a uniform area of protection greater than any other main line fighter in the Million Worlds. A very flexible design, it was made to exploit the weaknesses of its opposition, and in so doing has served with distinction and often brilliance. It was named after one of the predatory seabirds of the seas of Caladan, a favorite of Duke Paulus in honor of the Duke after his untimely death.

## A Treatise on Treachery: the Harkonnen Barony Admiralty

The Baron Vladimir Harkonnen is a return to the status quo for the most dangerous house in the Imperium. While some mentats calculated a chance of the unassuming Abulurd to be a positive

influence on the behavior for the house, Baron Harkonnen's influence has ensured the continuing ravenous hunger for power as the prime motivator in its dealings with others.

While House Harkonnen's intentions are apparent, their means grow ever more devious, never more so while the twisted mentat Piter deVries as the House Master of Assassins. The defection of the scientist who discovered the No Cloak from the researchers of House Richese was a prime example of this, as was his later demise at the hands of Glossu Raban. A variant of this technology, the No Room, suspended outside the walls of local space-time in an alternate dimension, provided the perfect local for the plotting of the Barony's web of intrigue and betrayal, away even from the prying minds of the prescient Guild Navigators.

However, when looking for naval might the Baron choose the profane over the sublime, and the designs favored by his Admiralty were chosen for brute strength and intimidation. The house's role as the governor of Arrakis and his ability to siphon off vast hordes of Spice allowed the bribes to the Guild administrators that paid for this privilege.

## Penance Destroyer

A penal ship, the Penance Destroyers are given the worst assignments, and sent intentionally into harms way. The officers are kept in line by explosive brain implants, while the crew has the more traditional heart plugs. Those few who survive their tenure on a Penance ship are often the most vicious and resourceful of Baron Harkonnen's minions, and can rise quickly in the ranks. This gives some little incentive to perform



adequately for those worst offenders.

A HCV, it carries crude large caliber short ranged weapons, which while inaccurate can cause a torrent of matter and explosive round fire in close. And while having no shields and only moderate armor the ship itself is built sturdily and can stand up to a pounding. They are often sent to point blank range. These ships have poor crews, as defined on page 24 of the *Wars of the Centauri Republic*, but occasionally this is balanced by an Elite officer amongst them, often a Ruathan or Rabbani looking for redemption in the eyes of the Harkonnen command for some perceived mercy, weakness or slight.

## Line Frigate

The Harkonnen ship of the Line, this Frigate bears a potent armament of Heavy Lasguns, Medium Lasguns, and Medium Blast Cannons, backed up by a decent fighter defense in its Flak Cannons. Used aggressively, the Line Frigate can often decimate its foes at range, with its main battery of three heavy lasguns capable of gutting many small vessels in just a few salvos. One of its most successful uses occurred in the Smuggler's War of the Red Crescent systems, where a squadron of line frigates with supporting craft decimated the rogue Guild Steersman Bienvenuto's pirate fleet with long range Lasgun fire.

The Line Frigate's weaknesses are two fold; the normal issues all Imperium ships must address without advanced computer support for its sensors, and a lack of adequate thrust compared to the lighter Landsraad Frigates. Still, its ability to lay down an impressive field of fire makes it a favorite of the homicidal Harkonnen captains.

## Defiler Heavy Fighter

The Defiler is a brute of a fighter, lacking anything like grace or dexterity. However, it's weapons suite more than makes up for its lack of charm. The Quad Flak Cannons are a disconcerting weapon, and while the dispersed flak bursts from its explosive rounds don't do as much damage as the designers had anticipated they often causes incidental damage to enemy fighters and can fray a pilot's nerves. This translates into a +2 dropout penalty for any fighter damaged by them. The rear ultralight Vulcan Railguns provide for an excellent defense, especially when on a Burst Rocket attack run.



## House Corrino – The Imperial Navy, the Lion Amongst the Stars

The Guild Peace applies less to House Corrino, as the Emperor's House plays a major role in enforcing said laws. As such the Corrino ships can be dedicated to more purely militaristic roles, and will appear to outsiders as a more traditional navy. That being said the Sardaukar have always been more focused on planetary combat, and the navy is not as strong as it could be because of that lack of focus.

Still, the weapons of the Imperial House are potent, and the designers had successfully anticipated many of the problems the

Imperial Navy would face as the enforcer of the social structure within the Million Worlds. In the end it was the myriad political skeins that fractured Imperial rule, and had less to do with the capability of the navy than the political realities which often forced it to react in less than the most optimum way.

## Pathfinder Destroyer

AHCV, the Pathfinder clears the way for the rest of the Corrino fleet. A capable combatant with a pair of medium lasguns, Vulcan railguns, and class-D missiles to intercept fighters and incoming ballistics, the Pathfinder is more known for its ability as a minesweeper. If a rogue House can't run because the Guild will not provide them transportation, they invariably fortify their siridar fiefdoms for the inevitable attack of the Sardaukar. The banished Houses of Transix in the eighth century of the eighth millennium kept the Sardaukar at bay by such means for over three months, an affront to the will and eminence of the Emperor. This directly led to the creation of the precursor of the Pathfinder. Since the creation of this newer model such rogue worlds barricading themselves has happened infrequently, but the few times it has occurred the Pathfinder Destroyer has been essential in bringing the rebel House to Imperial justice.

## Golden Lion Battlecruiser

A limited run ship (10%), the Golden Lions are the only true dreadnoughts in the Imperium. They could have turned the tide during the great Jihad if they had been utilized correctly, but the foresight of Maud'dib and overt acts of sabotage minimized their impact. When the Guild turned on the Emperor when

they realized that Maud'dib had control of the spice the Battlecruisers sat idly in their moorings, lacking Guild transportation to bring them to battle.

A true war craft, this capital ship carries the heaviest Lasguns ever created, and bristled with railguns, missile defenses and rail interceptor arrays. Designed as a fleet flagship and intended as a space control ship, it carries four flights of fighters and a dozen assault shuttles, and proved a useful asset in space combat, interdiction, and planetary assault.

Known as Shaddam's folly, the three Golden Lions produced never saw actual combat. In large part this was due to bureaucratic wrangling, as there were many who opposed their creation. The Guild felt that the warship was too much a threat to their Heighliners in its mere existence, the Sardaukar feared a shift in dominance from their Legions to the Imperial Navy, and CHOAM resented the vast drain on imperial coffers it represented.

Still, they proved their worth during the Offerman uprising, when the appearance of a single battlecruiser caused a collapse in the rebel forces without a shot ever being fired.

## Scion Light Fighter

The rivalry between Ix and Richese for defense contract continued, with Richese scoring a major victory in its fighter designs the Padishah and Shirkhan. The default fighters for decades, it wasn't until the Ix shipwrights developed a new weapons system and mounted it on a agile and swift interceptor that they managed to win a large portion of the Imperial contract back. The Prism Gatling Laser was a major breakthrough, generating a myriad

of scintillating lasgun beams from a single source. While weaker than normal lasguns and lacking coherency forcing a limited range, they realized it would make a perfect weapon for an interceptor. The Scion Light Fighter was built around this weapon, and provided an impressive anti-fighter capability for the Imperial navy.

## The Bene Gesserit:



## the rule of the perfected mind

The Bene Gesserit Sisterhood made little preparations for the coming war, as that was an objective that could easily be achieved through subtle manipulation, and the lesser houses

could always be brought to their bidding through marriage ties, blackmail and seduction. Indeed, with their influence over Emperor Shaddam himself they found there was little need for other action.

However, they did require a presence in the outer reaches of the Million Worlds, to ensure the teachings of their order were disseminated to all the cultures of the Imperium, in order to prepare the way for the coming of their messiah, the Kwisatz Haderach. For this they created the Protectiva Missionara Order, and great vessels to convey the Sisters in protection to the wilder regions of space.

## Protectiva Missionary Ship

The cargo vessels that feed the great religious creation of the Bene Gesserit, Missionary ships can be found scattered through all the known corners of the universe. Creating the foundations for the coming of the Kwisatz Haderach, the Missionary vessels have special charters with the Guild that takes them beyond the normal borders of the Imperium. In such backwaters of civilization, their ability to protect the Sisters of the Order becomes a necessary if unwelcome factor of their design. Lightly armored, the vessels Holtzman shields are strong, as it wasn't anticipated that the backwards civilizations they encounter would have Lasgun capability. The Missionary ship also has a large hangar capacity and extensive cargo room.

## Acolyte Escort Cutter

The escort cutter of choice for the Bene Gesserit Sisterhood, the Acolyte combines the rapid fire close defense capability of the Double Chaingun with the



interceptor missiles of the Class-D Missile Rack. When they upgraded the vessel to include a Rail Interceptor Array mounted forward, the Witches created the premier defensive cutter in the Imperium. They were a common sight escorting the great Mission Protectiva Transports to the outer edges of the Imperium, and often were spotted among House Minor fleets that had the favor of the Sisterhood.

## Wayfarer Diplomatic Courier

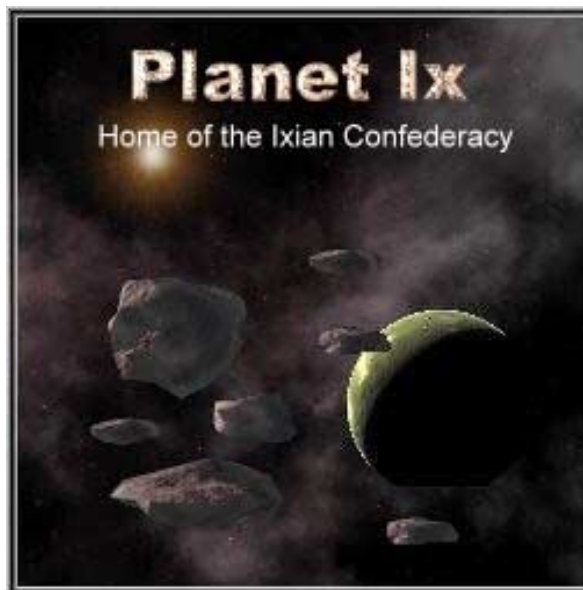
Often seen scuttling from crisis to trouble spot within the Imperium, the Wayfarer is a well known ship among the nobility of the Million Worlds. Indeed, its sumptuous appointments and luxurious surroundings include a section used exclusively for diplomatic conferences, and it was the ship of choice of Anirul Sadow Tonkin, a Bene Gesserit Reverend Mother and wife of the Padishah Emperor Shaddam IVth.

A MCV, the Wayfarer diplomatic courier fills a pressing need for the Sisterhood. It relies on agility and speed more than weaponry, and armor rather than shields. This is because the Witches will never willingly trust the welfare of the Reverend Mother on the vagaries of a Holtzman reaction. Weaponry is focused on defensive abilities, including four Vulcan Railguns and 2 Class-D Missiles Racks.

## Gom Jabbar Corvette

Externally indistinguishable from the Bene Gesserit Wayfarer Diplomatic Courier, the Gom Jabbar is an assassins ship. Designed to get close in to the intended victim using

stealth and diplomatic immunity as its guide, the Gom Jabbar is designed to use multiphasic shells to cause internal flash damage, or to use its concealed grappling claw to board and apprehend its target. These ships are rarely used, and are so successful they rarely leave any witnesses. Most House leaders consider their existence just another myth concerning the perfidy of the Bene Gesserit. Their wives, mentors and advisors agree that the very rumor of its existence is the height of foolishness.



## House Vernius of Ix: Never Again Shall their Profane Feet Touch the Soil of Ix

House Vernius of Ix is often considered a necessary evil. While treading delicately along the line of the Great Proscription against forming a machine in the image of a human mind with their expert

systems and training mechs, the technical ability and infrastructure of Ix are unmatched in the Imperium. Earl Dominic Vernius made the fatal error that his fief's goods were so necessary to the continuation of the system of governance of the Million Worlds that he was all but unassailable. After all, who but Ix could make the massive Heighliners that all commerce depended on? The result was the death of his wife, and the subjugation of his proud world at the hands of the Bene Tleixalu Order and with covert assistance from the legions of the Sardaukar.

Earl Rhombur, his son who endured years of banishment from his beloved world, will not make the same mistake. While owing a great debt to House Atreides, Vernius and Ix have taken great pains to remain neutral in the current political climate. Indeed, some would call the Earl overly cautious, or even craven. Yet the leader of Ix realizes what he must do before any other action; ensure that no foreign soldier ever touches the sacred soil of his homeland.

To this end, Earl Rhombur of the Great House Vernius of Ix has spent his time wisely.

## Amtal Export Fighter

The Amtal Export fighter is a common fighter in use by every faction. It was one of the first fighters mass produced by the House as it recovered from the invasion of Ix by the Bene Tleilaxu, and many in the Imperium wondered if the famed manufacturers had lost their touch when it came to new designs. An average fighter all around, the Amtal's only redeeming quality was its inexpensive cost. Because of this

House Richese took the lead in fighter design, and the Padishah and Shirkhan became the default superiority fighters for another generation. Indeed, even the name Amtal was met with derision. A galac term meaning 'tested to the very edge of destruction and beyond', many felt it was all too appropriate for such a mediocre offering.

Which was exactly the way Earl Rhombus wanted it.

## Kanly Assault Fighter

His true intent was only shown later. While the Amtal was widely sold to lesser houses, the Kanly Assault fighter was a design reserved for House Ix alone. With the same profile as the Amtal, it was often mistaken for its cheaper, ubiquitous cousin. The Kanly carried a single powerful Plasma Bolt cannon, able to chew through the armor of any frigate in space with ease. However, in a universe filled with shielded ships, it was considered a strange design, as the plasma weapon had no additional effect against the Holtzman generators.

Again, according to Ixian design. For the Kanly fielded a weapon unseen before in the Imperium. Even the Lion Throne could not have anticipated the Harmonic Resonator. Using their unique knowledge of ship construction and the abilities of the Holtzman shield, Ixian researchers created a weapon designed to bypass the shield itself, and set up a resonance wave that would cancel out the shield for short periods. This ability came as a great surprise to enemy commanders, leaving ships dangerously exposed for uncomfortably long times.

## Freyn Hunter-Seeker

The Freyn Hunter-Seeker is a weapon of last resort for the Ix homeworld, designed as a last ditch effort to avoid invasion. Knowing that the quality of their troops was inferior, the Lord of Ix pledged that no invasion force would ever land there again. The Freyn, translated as the Outcast Foreigner, take the Great Proscripture to its very limits and beyond, its guidance system and the HS controller being at the absolute edge of what could be allowed by galactic law. Understanding that knowledge of these weapons could result in a Jihad against them, the Ixians would deploy them only in a time of utmost crisis - or absolute potential. The Freyn Hunter-Seeker uses the Orieni control system for Hunter-Killers as detailed in *Wars of the Centauri Republic*, pages 34 and 35.

## Ix Overseer Hunter-Seeker Controller

A variant of the Overseer Scout, the Controller is the only method that Ix has of projecting power with its H-S weapons, with the majority of Hunter-Seekers being deployed in asteroids around the world of Ix and other important strategic targets in that system. While it does its best to remain neutral considering how precipitous its roll as provider of technology to a culture still scarred by the betrayal of the sentient AI, Earl Rhombus realizes that some games have to be played. And while reluctant to enter combat in anything but the defense of his home system, it was argued that some day it might become necessary. The Controller is a limited ship (33%).

## Weapons of the Imperium

### Atreides Huffuf Lens Vulcan Railgun

The Huffuf Oil Lens is the most accurate optical instrument in the Imperium, able to refine light to define things a micron in size. This optical technology has long been in use to target the Lasguns employed by various powers; indeed this refinement is what allows them to ignore the normal 4-point EW lock for piercing mode. However, its incorporation into the Vulcan Railgun is a new development, so far one pioneered only among the Mentats at House Atreides.

The implementation of this advanced optic ability has greatly increased the targeting and fire control rating of the Vulcan Railguns, making the Atreides vessels that are deemed worthy of the extra expense of these weapons some of the most capable anti-fighter vessels among all of the fleets of the Landsraad.

### Harkonnen Burst Rocket

The Burst Rocket is a compact, almost squat weapon, with the ballistic weapon comprised almost entirely of warhead with relatively little thrust fuel. This provides for a very limited range, but carries a big punch. The weapon is also extremely inaccurate, but the Harkonnen Admiralty's fascination with shock value and intimidation is well served by the damage these small missiles can provide.

## Burst Rocket

**Cost:** 5 combat points

**Range:** 5 hexes

**Damage:** 15

**Fire Control:** +1/+0/-5

**Special:** Flash 5 points of damage in Hex

*Note* - the Flash damage isn't likely to harm any warships in the hex, but could do light damage to light and medium fighters and shuttles nearby, especially in numbers.

## Bene Gesserit Triple Chainguns

An obsolescent weapon that served as the precursor to the common Vulcan Railgun, the chaingun is found now primarily in commercial shipping. The velocity of the shell was deemed too slow to provide sufficient armor penetration capability compared to newer models, so it eventually was relegated to back line use.

Still, it's a common weapon, and the Bene Gesserit often use it on atmospheric ships, as they find its suppressive fire capability an asset in planetary situations, and it doesn't draw the same notice as current military hardware in known space.

The Triple Chaingun is classified as an explosive weapon, in that it uses explosive ammunition. This does standard damage, but treats armor as normal.

## Ixian Harmonic Resonator

Another leap forward for the weapon designers of Ix, the Harmonic Resonator at its core is a modified Holtzman shield designed to penetrate other shields slowly and sending out a harmonic pulse that

disables shield generators. Boring to the edge of the shield, the weapon slowly penetrated the Holtzman resonance, slipping in under the protective screen and causing a wave amplification effect once it touched the hull. It takes 0-2 turns for the weapon to burrow through the shield, knocking all of the shields on the ship down, causing the above-specified critical rolls, and extending the length of the shield failure by 1 turn for every addition Resonator that attached to the ship. The resulting energy surge within the vessel often damaged shields for long periods of time (causing a +8 critical), and could even cause power outages over the ship (a +4 critical against the reactor as well).

Furthermore, the Resonator itself was a powerful shield generator, the one normally attached to the Kanly. When fired it goes into an overloaded mode, and all intercept against the ballistic is reduced by half, rounded down. However, a Prism Lasgun that hits the inbound Resonator causes a Holtzman reaction as a strength 5 Holtzman shield.

The only true way to stop a Harmonic Resonator is to destroy it from outside the ship, by other ships targeting the Resonator while its still on the ships Holtzman shield. Ships may fire at the Resonator at -6 to hit of the ships profile, and it requires 6 points of damage to destroy. Any shots that miss by 1-6 points hit the ship instead of the Resonator, doing normal damage.

## Of Endings

*“I must not fear. Fear is the mind-killer. Fear is the little-death that brings total obliteration. I will face my fear. I will permit it to pass over me and through me. And when it has gone past I will turn the inner eye to see its path. Where the fear has gone there will be nothing. Only I will remain.”*

### Bene Gesserit Litany Against Fear

Yes, that time again, as the latest installment of Dune Wars ends, blown into the sandy wastes as if born by the Coriolos Storm! Hope these ships and technologies add to your gaming experience. Next up, we'll analyze the tactical campaign of the Red Crescent Rotue, the last major border flash prior to the rise of Maud'dib, that showcased both the technology and the intrigue that marks the conflicts of the Imperium as so unique. And in the near future I hope to extend work on Dune into Crossovers, with specific rules for tech interactions with other universes, highlighting the Holtzman shield and its various interactions. And also I'll introduce the Bleed, a campaign artifice intended to allow interactions between multiple sci-fi genres in a neutral ground between them all.

Make sure your stillsuit is fastened properly, and beware of Worm sign!

\* \* \*



# Back to Nexus

## The Nexus Universe - Part 2

### The Nexus Universe: The Sal-bez & Craytan

*By Geoffrey & Jeremy Stano*

### Introduction

In keeping with the theme for this Great Machine, Jeremy and I have focused on creating several of the common bases, OSATs, and freighters that served during the timeframe of the Craytan War. There are several themes that we wanted to run throughout the Nexus Universe. First, was a reworking of the ballistic rules with rules and explanations for our changes in Great Machine 12. Further playtesting has lead to a slight change in the rules, presented below. In addition to the ballistics, we felt that the Nexus setting required bases and OSATs to serve a more pivotal role in planetary

defense. The Babylon 5 Wars rulebook states how bases served as the linchpin of a planet's defense, but in practice, this did not result in the game. As a result, we have focused on creating much stronger defenses in Nexus as seen in the massive Craytan Deprin Heavy OSAT and the ballistic accelerator and sensor mine enhancements available to bases and OSATs. While the handful of bases and OSATs presented here are more on par with the current B5 Wars Universe, they are a sign of things to come. The Nexus races needed powerful defenses as so many of their worlds were accessible via Nexus. Typically, it was cheaper to provide strong static defenses for worlds than to leave battle fleets in orbit of every vital system.

Jeremy and I would like to take this moment to extend our thanks to Tyrel for his help in looking over much of the Nexus material and

offering constructive criticism. Also, credit is due to Ben Rubery, whose bil-pro weapons have been used and modified for many of the Craytan ships. Again, Tyrel has provided plenty of inspiration for the Nexus setting with all of the work he has done with the Escalation Wars setting. Many thanks to both of you!

## New Rules for the Nexus Setting

### Ballistics Combat Resolution

All ballistics in the Nexus universe are announced as firing at the same time as regular weapons fire. However, due to their slower speeds, they do not hit until the Resolve Ballistic Weapon Attacks of the following turn. All other rules,

such as interception, remain the same. This allows ballistics to keep their primary advantages of range, no range penalty, and hitting before weapons fire, while at the same time allowing the targets of a ballistic attack to “take action” against the attack. Typically, OEW is not applied to the target until the next turn, when the munitions are scheduled to hit.

Secondly, all ballistic weapons are given two maximum ranges in their weapon statistics. The first is the maximum launch range. The second, in parenthesis, is the maximum travel range. This value is used for missile and torpedo style weapons. For playtest purposes, all ships in the Nexus setting currently have a maximum travel range that is 10 hexes greater than their maximum launch range.

## Ballistic Accelerator

**Availability:** Any year (Advanced Accelerators are not available until 2168.)

**Cost:** Determine the maximum damage the weapon can cause in a single shot. The ballistic accelerator is one-fourth this value (round fractions up). For pulse-style weapons, sum the total damage for the maximum number of pulses and use one-fourth of this value. Advanced accelerators cost one-third the maximum damage.

**Restrictions:** This may only be used on bases or OSATs.

Another example of the improvements on fixed defenses by the Nexus races is seen in their use of ballistic weapons. Nearly every base or OSAT using ballistics in the Nexus Universe is equipped with a ballistic accelerator. Due to the size of these units, or in the OSAT's case

not needing crew or engine compartments, and being stabilized platforms, ballistic launching systems are equipped with a system that accelerates the munitions at a high speed away from the base or OSAT. This boost greatly extends the range of the munitions. The standard ballistic accelerator adds 30 hexes to the launch and total range of the weapon used. The advanced accelerator adds 40 hexes to the launch and total range of the weapon used. As can be seen, each version of the accelerator allows static defenses an incredible sphere of influence.

## Sensor Mines

**Availability:** Any year

**Cost:** 10% the value of the unit being assisted (Gives 4 sensor mines)

Up to two additional sensor mines may be purchased, but each additional mine costs an additional 5% of the base or OSAT's base point value. Therefore, a base with six sensor mines would have to pay 20% of its base cost for all six.

**Restrictions:** This may only be used for bases or OSATs. Ballistic weapons benefit from the bonus fire control only if their target is within the bonus range of the sensor mines at the moment of impact.

**Signature:** 4

**Damage:** 14

All of the races in the Nexus region looked for ways to improve the capabilities of their fixed defenses. This arose out of the efforts of homegrown raiders, typically before most of the races achieved first contact. The major issue that plagued all of the races

was small attack craft, while individually weak, which could race up and inundate the defenses of bases or OSATs. Efforts were taken to create defensive weapons that could engage these small units at range, but these failed, as weapons that had the range and fire control to attack small units at range were too impractical for use.

Each race eventually found ways to utilize passive sensor mines to enhance the firing solutions of their bases and OSATs. The system was found to radically increase the range of weapons on these units as well as provide bonus fire control against enemy units near the base or OSAT. For purposes of these rules, sensor mines are considered very basic and a generic rule can be used for sensor mines of all races. The advantages of sensor mines are listed below.

Typically, sensor mines are deployed in groups of four, which offered the greatest advantages for the least amount of cost. Sensor mine packages are bought individually for each base or OSAT and different bases and OSATs cannot use each other's sensor mines. Each mine is deployed up to 15 hexes away from the base, or 8 hexes away from the OSAT it is assigned to.

The effect of sensor mines is to reduce the range penalty of any shot by the base or OSAT by one-half, with any fractions rounded down. For example, a Sal-bez Tak'riz OSAT wishes to fire its laser cutter at a Craytan Epron cruiser 22 hexes away. Normally, the range penalty would be -11 to hit. However, the sensor mines reduces this by 5 to -6 (ie:  $-11/2 = 5.5$ , rounded down to 5). In addition, bonus fire control points of +1 per active sensor mine are applied to the to hit number on any enemy unit within 15 hexes of a

base or 8 hexes of an OSAT. This bonus is cumulative with the halving of the range penalty.

When sensor mines are detected and destroyed, it affects the ability of the sensor mines to assist the unit they are deployed with. For each sensor mine destroyed, the bonus fire control is reduced by one. If only one sensor mine remains, all bonuses to fire control and range penalty are lost.

## New Union of Craytan States Ships

### Dela Freighter

As one of the earliest ships still in service in the Craytan fleet, the Dela Freighter is sluggish and ungainly. Despite this, the Craytan appreciate its ease of construction, which makes up for its slightly smaller cargo capacity. Due to its modular construction, resulting in the Dela using connecting struts, the Craytan chose this hull to become the basis for many of their auxiliary units. The Dela does have good weapons coverage, but generally lacks the range and sensor power to fully defend itself. In spite of all of its shortcomings, the Dela is the backbone of Craytan commerce and large convoys were a common sight once Nexus was discovered.

### Deprin Orbital Defenses

These massive heavy OSATs date back to the early days of the Union. Several of these units were deployed to provide security to the fledgling Union. While most of the

Craytan nations joined the Union, several abstained and a select few were outright hostile. The Deprin was designed to be able to engage and destroy any given ship the Craytan had at the time. Central to its armament were two massive turrets holding Assault Cannon Batteries. Mounting the batteries on turrets allowed the Deprin to engage multiple opponents. The triple chatter cannons were installed to prevent the Deprin's destruction by surface launched missiles and to deter attacks by small craft of nations opposed to the Union. Two heavy plasma guns were added, almost as an afterthought. Only a few of these massive gun batteries were built, but they served in key defensive locations. The Craytan usually view one to three of these units sufficient for their needs. By today's standards, the main weapons are primitive, but are still surprisingly effective. Even with the war with the Sal-bez spurring on technological development, the Assault Cannon Batteries were still the longest ranged weapon available. This would remain the case for decades to come and Deprins would remain key units in the defense of Craytan holdings. The Craytan viewed these units as miniature bases, able to project firepower at a minimum of expense. As a result, the Craytan used bases in only the most key locations. It was felt that the Deprin could do the job far more efficiently and provided a harder target to hit. In its ultimate configuration, the Deprin commands respect from even the most advanced foes as sensor mines and ballistic accelerators allow it to destroy many opponents before they can properly engage.

## New Sal-bez Coalition Units

### Vaz'tak System Tug

*(Restricted Deployment)*

The Vaz'tak System Tug was designed as a unit capable of lifting very large loads out of a planetary gravity well and bringing them back. While certain items could be constructed in shipyards and launched into orbit by less expensive means, the system tug allowed complex components, such as reactors and engine parts, to be built on the ground more efficiently and taken into orbit. The Vaz'tak was reserved only for roles where standard cargo shuttlecraft were too small. Another advantage was that the Vaz'tak could also transport oddly shaped components with ease between its cargo pylons. These ships were only rarely used for intra- or inter-system transport as the more common Heavy Freighter could handle those mundane tasks. A notable exception was during the Craytan War, where several of the tugs were used to transport components for a forward base to the Craytan home system.

### Heavy Freighter

*(Common Heavy Prospector Variant)*

In yet another successful variant of the civilian Heavy Prospector hull, the Heavy Freighter trades in its heavy laser cutter and grappling claws for an expanded cargo shuttle deck and additional cargo space. While this freighter did not have the largest capacity, compared to some of the other race's freighters, it was sturdy, fast, and capable of fending off small raiders, should the need



arise. Even when the military variants of this hull were scrapped, this freighter was still a common sight throughout many parts of the Nexus region.

## Heavy Prospector

In the early years of the Coalition, the Heavy Prospector was found throughout the Sal-bez home system and newly discovered territories, scouring the asteroid belts for precious metals and needed ores. At the time of its development, the Sal-bez home system was rich in valuable asteroids and this craft was designed to take advantage of this resource. The prospector mounts a single heavy laser cutter and two grappling claws. The grappling claws, while an unusual feature, allow the prospector to dock with up to two asteroids and deploy miners. In other situations, both claws would be used to dock a single asteroid in order to be towed to another location. In one notable case, the Sal-bez used a heavy prospector with extra marines to surprise a Craytan patrol in order to

capture information. It was this mission that allowed the Sal-bez to finally interpret the Craytan language.

## Bev'ram Mining Center

Several of these bases could be found throughout the Sal-bez home system to centralize mining operations in the abundant asteroid fields. The development of these stations allowed the Early Explorers the devote more time to exploring hyperspace than operating as command centers for mining operations. Typically, any solar system that had a major Sal-bez presence would see at least one of these stations deployed. Typically, large asteroids that cannot be easily mined in the field, or too valuable to leave to raiders, were brought to Bev'ram mining centers. Once there, the wide array of laser cutters would carve off pieces of asteroid that would be grappled by the base and brought into expandable docking bays. Once firmly grappled and docked, the bay would be pressurized to allow workers to mine the asteroids without the need for special suits. While this was expensive to set-up, the process drastically increased the efficiency of operations. The Craytan, in the opening moves of the Craytan War, destroyed several of these bases. Surprisingly, when they had sensor mines, these bases managed to defend themselves better than expected. After the war, the Sal-bez chose the Bev'ram to undergo upgrades to

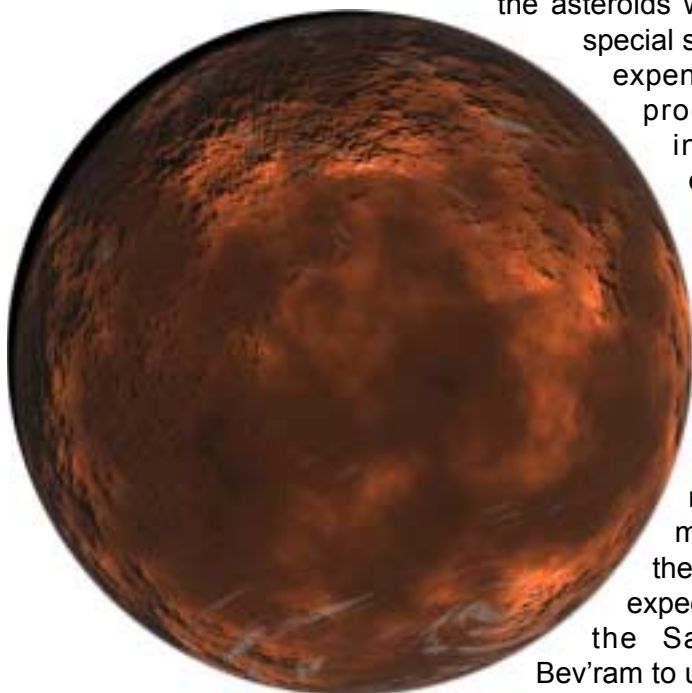
become the first military base for the rapidly growing, and improving, Sal-bez navy.

## Tak'riz Early OSAT

It has often been remarked that had the Craytan been a larger power and not been system bound, they would have easily won the war against the Sal-bez. This was in part due to their better training, tactics, and dedicated military vessels. In the end, the Sal-bez turned out to be quick studies, but victory was mostly assured by the superior numbers and industrial capacity that the Sal-bez had. Another example of just how unprepared and inexperienced the Sal-bez were in modern space warfare was with their first defense satellite. After the surprise attack on their home system by the Craytan, the Sal-bez scrambled to field anything that could bolster the homeworld's and other strategic location's defenses. As a result, the Tak'riz was developed using components available in large quantities. This meant that the larger heavy laser cutter was unavailable as all production was shifted towards New Patrol Cruisers and Heavy Frigates. This left the basic laser cutter and the early swarm torpedo, which was just coming into widespread use by the Sal-bez. The Tak'riz is weak by any measure, but served nonetheless as the only unit of that type available. Immediately after the war, the Sal-bez took stock of their situation and began a massive campaign to develop a true military and the Tak'riz was eventually decommissioned, although it remained in service for well over a decade.

## Rev'tan OSAT

The Rev'tan was one of the first



indications of rapidly modernizing Sal-bez Navy, in both technical and professional terms during the early 2120s. At this time, the Sal-bez were beginning to fully integrate some of the new technologies offered by the *Av'rtz* discovery nearly sixty years previously. This included the new medium laser cannon (a vast improvement over the various laser cutters) and improvements to the early swarm torpedo resulting in the feared swarm torpedo. The Sal-bez took note of the massive, yet effective Craytan Deprin orbital defense satellites and attempted to create an OSAT that was more cost effective, yet still commanded firepower and large sphere of influence. In that, the Rev'tan was a success. The satellite's only real failing was in defensive weaponry. While problematic, Rev'tan's upgraded with ballistic accelerators and sensor mines proved to be deadly to any opponent, especially the swarm torpedoes. The Rev'tan entered service just before the Polaren Conflict, but colony defenses usually relied upon the older Tak'riz as the newer Rev'tans were used for the homeworld first. However, in the few instances that Rev'tans were on the frontlines with the Polarens, these upgraded satellites proved their worth, halting assaults by large Polaren combined ships and LCV packs. This OSAT served throughout the First War of Control and beyond.

\* \* \*

## Attacking Earth: Federation vs. Breen

By Keith Carpenter

### Introduction

2375 marks a turning point in the war. The Federation Alliance finally seems to be holding its own and pushing the Dominion back. Then Starfleet headquarters is attacked. Using a small fleet, the Breen enters the war with a bang, causing a massive blow to the Alliance morale. The attack occurs in two steps, one being to tie up Federation defence vessels by attacking Starbase 1, the second being a ground attack on Starfleet Headquarters itself.

### Federation Forces

1x Starbase (Upgraded)  
1x Sovereign Dreadnought (refit)  
1x Akira Strike Cruiser  
18x Peregrine Fighters (4 torpedoes each)  
6x Danube Runabouts (10 torpedoes each)

### Breen Forces

1x Nol Thek Battle Carrier  
4x Ghan Lak Frigate  
12x Kohr Than Assault Fighter  
2x Vos Lak Covert Frigate

### Setup

Starbase is in the centre, Sovereign and Akira at opposing ends speeds less than 5. Breen vessels drop out of warp on turn two in a pre-selected hex (but they already know the exact location of the Starbase). All fighters start in their respective carrier vessels. The runabouts start docked one per bay aboard the Starbase. The Breen start

with weapons and shields armed, the Covert Frigates may start cloaked. Federation forces may not arm begin arming weapons or raising shields until turn three.

### Special Rules

Neither side is allowed to ram.

### Victory Conditions

For the Breen, this attack is simply a diversion. They must make the battle last 30 turns, keeping the Federation starships from attacking the main force. This can only be accomplished if a frigate or carrier is intact and visible at all times throughout those thirty turns. If the entire over half the heavy force is intact at the end, or a Federation starship or base has been destroyed, then a major victory has been won.

For the Federation, who are not really aware of the threat due to jammed comms, a major victory will be won if the entire fleet is destroyed or driven off in less than thirty turns, as it will give them a chance to save Starfleet headquarters. A minor victory is won if all starships/starbase are intact at the end of the thirty turns.

### Historical Outcome

Starfleet got caught out unprepared. The Breen diversion succeeded in tying up the Starfleet vessels. Better than that, they succeeded in heavily damaging both Starbase 1 and the Akira class USS Columbia. Although the Breen paid heavily for the sneak attack, the battle was truly a dark day for the Federation, and a glorious one for the Dominion and their new allies.

\* \* \*



# Federation Warship Voyager

## The U.S.S. Voyager That Never Was

By Adam Keane

*"When diplomacy fails, there's only one alternative, violence. Force must be applied without apology. It's the Starfleet way."*  
- Janeway

*"Voyager wasn't a warship. We were explorers." — the Doctor.*  
*"Yes, I know: trying to get home, to Mars." — Quarren.*  
*"Earth! You see, you couldn't even get that right!" — the Doctor.*

*"Inconsistencies? I don't know where to begin. Granted, this looks like the briefing room, but*

*these aren't the people I knew. No one behaved like this. Well...aside from Mr. Paris."* — the Doctor.

*"Defeat, genocide... why squabble with semantics?"* - Janeway

## Introduction

This ship is based on the historical record of *U.S.S. Voyager* 700 years in the future from the episode "Living Witness". There is just something about that episode that got the entire spirit of Voyager right, only the contempt for Gene Roddenberry's vision is right out in the open. Now as for the ship, that is how Voyager is often portrayed, destroying Borg cubes right, left and center.

But for balance I wanted it to be powerful, but not broken. For this

I looked at four comparable ships: the Intrepid Class, the Prometheus, the Galaxy Heavy Command Cruiser, and the Sovereign. I set the structure and size the same as the Intrepid but wanted heavier firepower, but not as good as a Sovereign. I also felt that looking at the images the phaser banks are fixed forward and not in the standard Federation wide arcs. So I made it a center-line monster, like a little Nova.

Off center it has the firepower of the Prometheus, but center-lined it turns into a Galaxy Heavy Command Cruiser. I upped the armor by 2 points all around, because that's the difference between a Borg Tactical Cube/Sphere and a normal Cube/Sphere. I was thinking of going with adaptive armor as it obviously had Borg tech, but I felt there was no direct evidence of it so I figured don't go crazy.

We saw Seven and her Borg



Drones, so I made the marines Borg to help boarding actions, since they beamed through forcefields they got "Enhanced Transporters". I didn't think this was too munchy, but I added some more marines to make it interesting as there was a quote that it had "300 soldiers".

## Playtesting the Warship Voyager

As for playtesting we played 4 quick games, nothing fancy.

Game	Opponent	Outcome
1	Intrepid	Win (brutal victory)
2	Prometheus	Lost (played stupid)
3	Galaxy	Win
4	Sovereign	Lost (very one-sided)
5	Prometheus	Win (close)
6	Sovereign	Lost

**Game 1:** Against the Intrepid class was very sad, it didn't last long, not long at all. But this outcome was not really in doubt.

**Game 2:** I got cockey, after obliterating the Intrepid in the last game I got outplayed, the arcs on the heavy phasers are very limited and I lost initiative at a few key points. We figured we would try this match again later.

**Game 3:** The Galaxy was out maneuvered and blown apart, the stronger shield helped, as did the wide arcs, and each took a pounding. In the end it was the heavier armor on the Warship Voyager against the rakes that really won the battle.

**Game 4:** The Sovereign alpha-striking and Voyager was crippled. I tried to use marines, but it was too

little too late. I don't think the extra marines are too overpowered. They just add some more interest.

**Game 5:** We switched players against the Prometheus for the 2<sup>nd</sup> time. Here both players were more cautious, photon torpedoes came into the front more so. I think Voyager would have lost, but the heavy armor blunted a lot of the hits and in the end it emerged victorious. I think almost every system was hit at least once.

**Game 6:** The Sovereign again. Voyager turtled and tried to play smarter, but it was just outclassed by the heavier through weight of the Sovereign and the much wider arcs. The armor help, but it wasn't enough.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

These games are what I used to determine the point value, I think it is about right, but might be off by 150 or more. Any suggestions or recommendations would be appreciated.

\* \* \*

## WORK IN PROGRESS: SFB-to-B5W

by Dale McKee

After many months of gathering dust, I decided to get back to my Star Fleet Battles to Babylon 5 Wars conversion. Partly I was inspired by the comment on the BBS [b5wars.net forums] that you weren't getting enough submissions from folks to keep it moving (which depresses me). ;-)

The goal is to create ships, not based on your Trek conversions, but the SFB game universe - which is loosely based on Original Series Trek.

I've got the Fed CA and Klingon D7 \*mostly\* done, and am working on the Romulan War Eagle. Right now the stumbling block for me is the big Plasma Torpedo. I have tried to keep the "rate of fire" consistent between the two games. In SFB, a "Plasma-R" torpedo fires 1/3, and does heavy damage, but is easily degraded by phaser fire... I'm waffling between making it a Heavy

Plasma (which works, but loses some of the flavor of a ballistic weapon - the idea is you can maneuver to take the torpedo on a different shield) or a Plasma Wave (which just doesn't seem to do enough damage)...

Anyway, attached are the two ships I've mostly completed. I still need to adjust their movement I believe, but the systems should be done.

\* \* \*

# SCENARIO: Unexpected Encounters

## Klingon Empire vs. Interstellar Alliance by Keith Carpenter

### Introduction

"Intelligence reports indicate that a Shadow vessel has taken the bait. Prepare to jump on my signal." The Ranger crew moved to their action stations on each vessel in the small flotilla of White Stars. They waited. "Jump."

The Klingon General surveyed his bridge crew. "It is said that you DEMAND an explanation for our trip to the Romulan border. So be it. Military Intelligence, such as it is, is saying that those devious pat'ak jay are up to no good. We are here to see that they do not! Action Stations."

These two statements occurred in two different universes under two different sets of circumstances. Unfortunately, the targeted Shadow vessel phased into hyperspace at exactly the same moment that the White Stars jumped out. This unusual occurrence caused a tear in the quantum boundary between the spaces, resulting in a random tumbling of the probable eleven dimensional continuums... erm, never mind. The White Stars jumped into a Klingon group that was primed for a fight! Really, that's all you need to know.



### Interstellar Alliance Forces

3x White Stars

### Klingon Forces

4x B'rel Birds of Prey  
2x K'Vort Birds of Prey

### Setup

Klingons deployed as they wish on the board, speeds no more than 5. On turn d6+1, the Whitestars jump into predetermined positions, each using their own jump engines. All weapons are charged, and Shields raised.

### Special Rules

The Klingons will not retreat from this fight. The IA player may if they so desire, but only by jumping out, none of this accelerating without intending to stop nonsense.

### Victory Conditions

Last man standing wins.

### Scenario Modifications

Turn this into a three-player fight by having the Romulans on the other side of the border. Klingon forces start on left, Romulans on right.

### Romulan Forces

2x D'deridex Warbirds  
1x D'renet Scout

\* \* \*

# Megafortress: Real World B5W



## Megafortress: Real World B5W

By Keith Carpenter

## Introduction

Nope, this isn't another set of scenarios, been too busy for that. I have however recently uploaded some real world aircraft SCS to a YahooGroup site dedicated to the Megafortress. If you haven't heard of Megafortress, read the books by Dale Brown to find out more.

I haven't finished converting them all yet, but there are about a dozen real world aircraft available for those players that want to use them. The site is located at:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/megafortress/>

The Megafortress, depending on your point of view, is either a guardian angel, or a beast from hell. It is a stealth B52, carrying a combination of stand off, precision air-to-air, air-to-ground, or anti-radar munitions. There have been several

iterations of this monster designed by the author Dale Brown, and in on the site you will find the details for several of these versions. This site contains whatever I can find on the EB52, including simulations for X-Plane and the B5W SCS.

In addition to the Megafortress ship sheets, several other B5W SCS are also available on the YahooGroup for players to download.

\* \* \*



**NOBLE ESSENCES**

**Attention Centauri Males:**

Just get a promotion? Need to wear your crest a little higher for your new place in society? Are you not sure what product will make the cut?

Try *Noble Essences* hair gel. The choice of rich, incompetent ship captains everywhere. Rumoured to have been used by Emperor Jeflo the VII. It will protect your hair from zero gravity, vacuum and whatever else space has to throw at it.





Enter the VBAM Games  
**ROAD TO VICTORY** contest  
for a chance to win some  
fabulous prizes!

*To enter, visit:*  
[www.vbamgames.com/contest](http://www.vbamgames.com/contest)

## About the ROAD TO VICTORY Contest

The ROAD TO VICTORY contest is a special promotion we are running through May 8, 2005 to promote both current and future VBAM Games products. All that it takes is a simple submission and you will be eligible to win one of several prize packages, ranging in value from \$15 USD (runners-up) to over \$90 USD (first prize)!

Contest winners will be announced on May 8, 2005 - Victory in Europe (VE) Day! The winners will be selected at random from the entrant pool. After the winners are determined, they will be contacted and arrangements made for them to receive their prize packages.

If you simply cannot wait for the May 8 drawing, feel free to visit the VBAM Games storefronts at RPGNow, RGPMall, and Lulu.com.

As an extra special bonus, the limited stock of print books and/

available at RGPMall will be 20% off for the entire month of April! We are looking to clear out our stock there, so get them while they're hot!

Last but not least, if you simply don't want to hassle with online ordering or print books and/

or dislike PDFs, VBAM Games has entered general distribution and your local game store should be able to order in a copy of our products, too.

\* \* \*

### Related Links:

#### RPGNow:

[RPGnow.com/default.php?manufacturers\\_id=569](http://RPGnow.com/default.php?manufacturers_id=569)

#### RGPMall:

[RPGmall.com/default.php?manufacturers\\_id=483](http://RPGmall.com/default.php?manufacturers_id=483)

#### Lulu:

[lulu.com/vbam](http://lulu.com/vbam)



## The Voice of the Resistance

*"We here at Babylon 5 and the Voice of the Resistance would like to warn everyone that EarthForce has neutralized the **b5wars.net** outpost. The colony has reported a hard drive error on one of its servers. How long the site will be unavailable is anyone's guess. Until b5wars.net returns, players can stop by the Planetside Forums ([forums.firenebula.com](http://forums.firenebula.com)) to get their B5W fix."*

## Credits

### Editors

Paul Brown  
Tyrel Lohr

### Layout

Tyrel Lohr

### Proofreading

Paul Brown  
Tyrel Lohr

### Submission Address

[submissions@firenebula.com](mailto:submissions@firenebula.com)

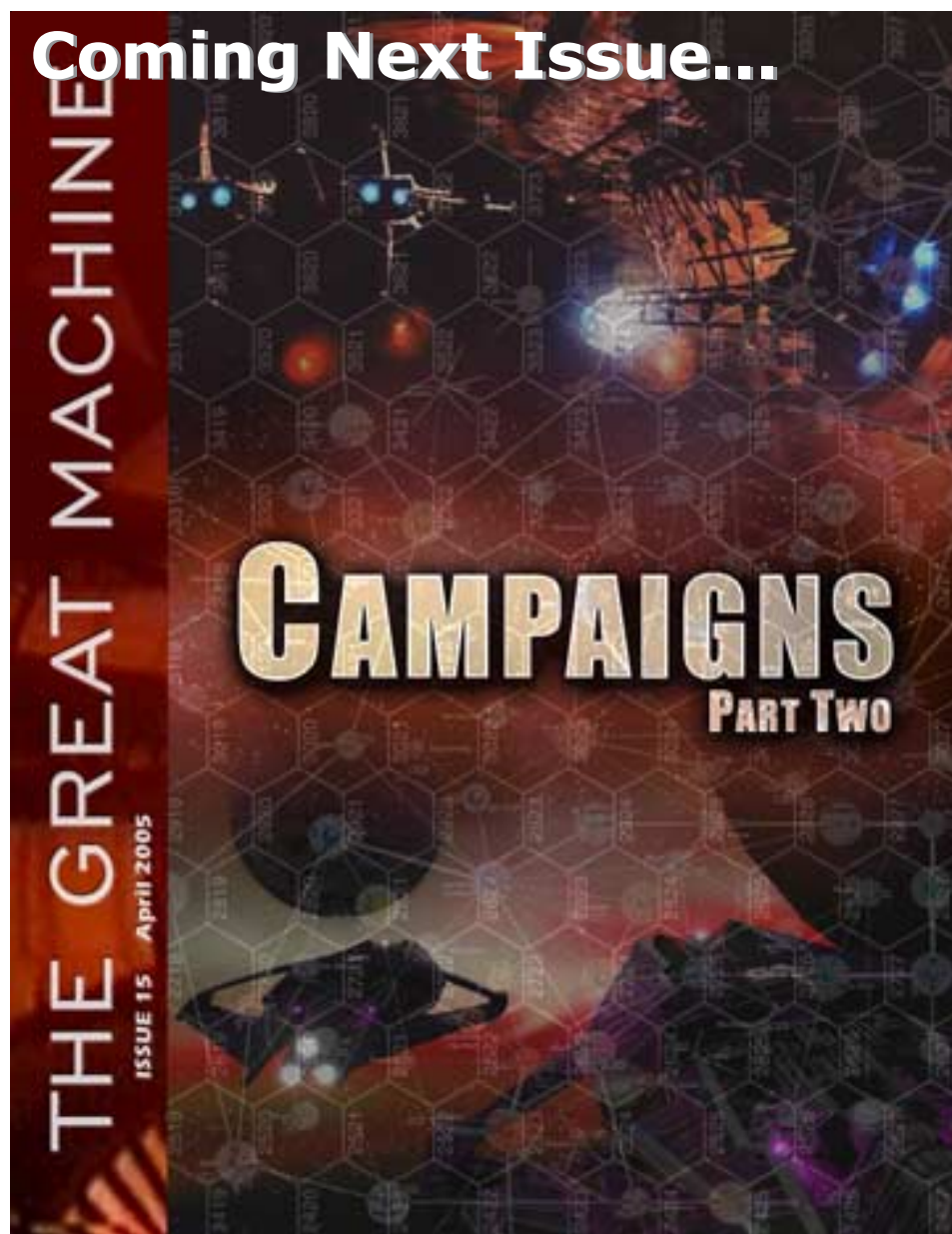
### Distribution Point

[planetside.firenebula.com](http://planetside.firenebula.com)

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

*BABYLON 5, BABYLON 5 WARS, the B5W Core Rules, FLEET ACTION, GROPOS and all related material are copyright © 2002 by Warner Bros. The contents of this unofficial publication are for personal, non-commercial use only. Any use of these product identities, copyrighted material or trademarks anywhere in this document and its associated files should not be viewed as a challenge to those copyrights or trademarks. Original concepts and mechanics remain the intellectual property of their respective authors.*

## Coming Next Issue...



Coming next issue, The Great Machine will continue its campaign-related theme, bringing you updated information on several leading campaign systems -- as well as new ships and races for use in your campaigns!

Remember, The Great Machine is what you make of it. We welcome any and all Babylon 5, Babylon 5 Wars, Fleet Action, Fleet Action 2, GROPOS, A Call to Arms, or other related news or items.

Send all submissions to [\*\*submissions@firenebula.com\*\*](mailto:submissions@firenebula.com).

---

**Submission Deadline: May 15, 2005**

---