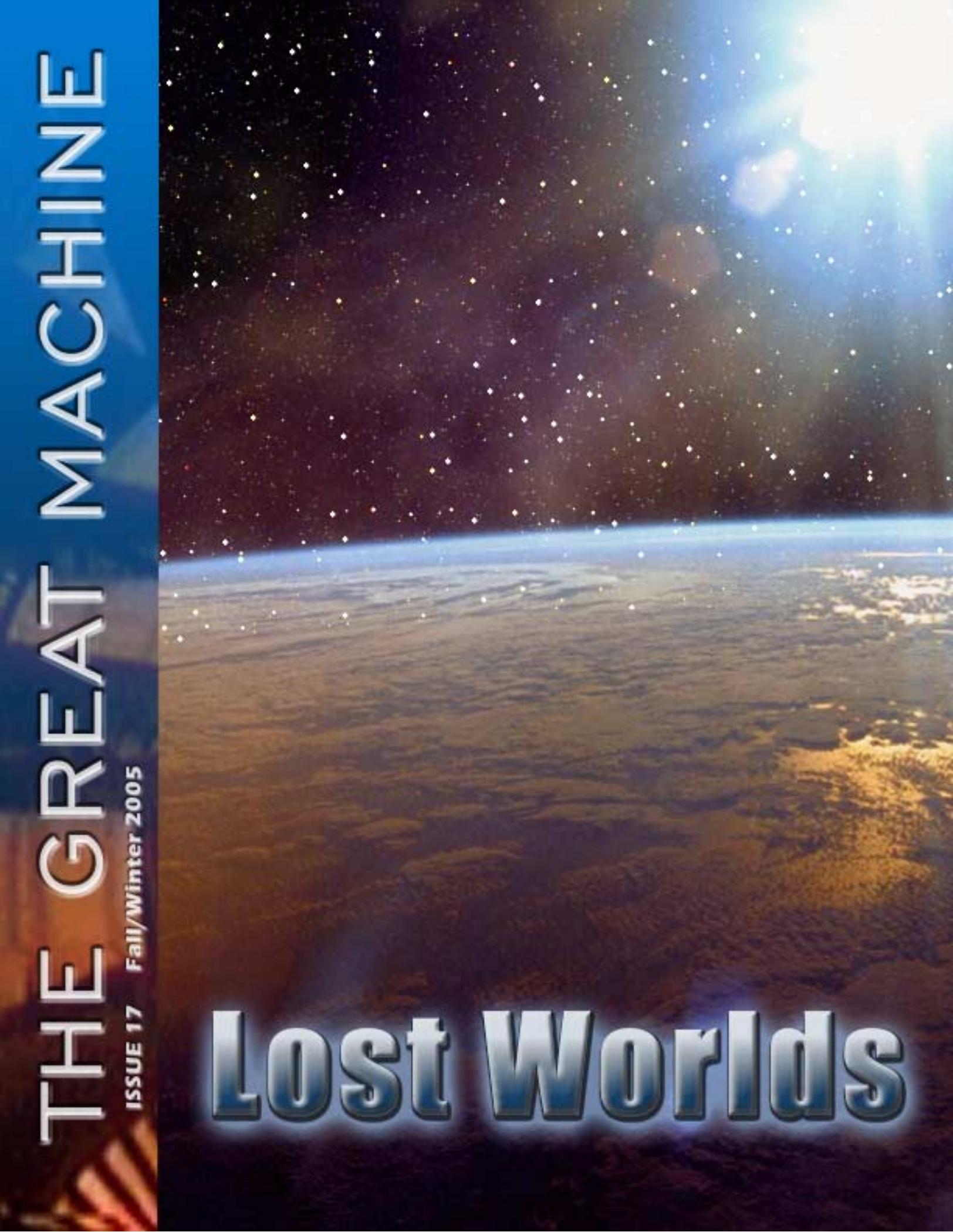


THE GREAT MACHINE

ISSUE 17 Fall/Winter 2005



Lost Worlds



Hellu tu ell zee reeders!

Efter a lung, lung teeme-a, thees issooe-a ooff Zee Greet Mecheene-a is feenelly feenished! I helped Zethres und Dreel cumplete-a thees issooe-a. It is fer mure-a ixceeding oon Ipseelun 3 thun it is trefeleeng veet peegs in spece-a.

Ve-a hefe-a seferel noo items thees issooe-a. Zee Tulkeed und Revnjuk ere-a feeghting, zee Untereuns ere-a booeelding, zee Nexoos uneeferse-a is ixpundeeng, zee Predeturs ere-a hoonteeng, und zeere-a is joost a vhule-a boonch ooff oozeer cuntent thet yuoo shuouldn't meess. Um gesh dee bork, bork!

Enjoy thees issooe-a, und be-a soore-a tu soobmeet sume-a mure-a cuntent su thet ve-a cun cunteenooe-a tu poobleesh Zee Greet Mecheene-a intu zee noo year. Hurty flurty schnipp schnipp! Ve-a ere-a cuoonteeng oon yuoo, joost leeke-a Dreel cuoonts oon me-a tu cuuk hees meels (und Zethres tu cleun up efter me-a!).

The Swedish Chef

CHEF TO THE STARS (PUN INTENDED)

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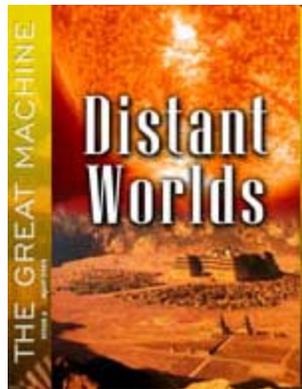
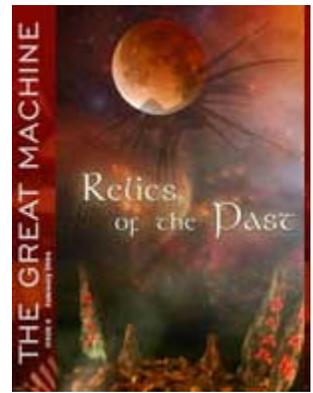
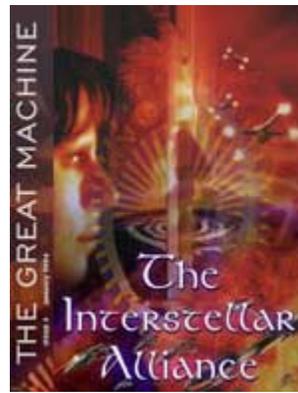
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The Great Machine: An Editorial

By Tyrel Lohr

Introduction

The Great Machine has been on something of a hiatus the last four months. Since Paul left for film school in Vancouver, my own work schedule has been a mess. As a direct result, The Great Machine has sat waiting for a new issue for months. Thankfully, it does not seem to have been missed – at least there are very few that have cried out for new issues or material, at least not like they did with the old Babcom magazine.

The introduction this issue is more of a personal editorial than anything else. Consider yourself forewarned!

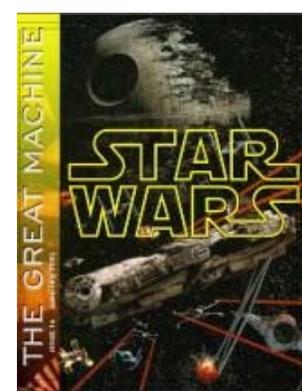
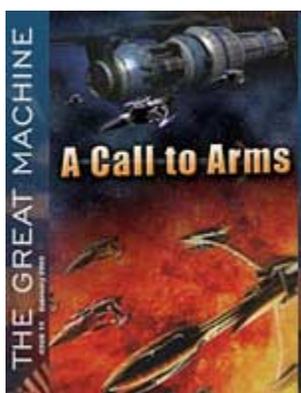
First, I would like to start off by thanking all of those that have taken the time to create and submit articles and content for this and previous issues of The Great Machine. Without your tireless effort this magazine would simply not have been possible.

As most know, my interest in the Babylon 5 Wars game system has been on the decline for months now. I have almost completely converted over to the Starmada X tactical system, though I still think B5W is an excellent system. Unfortunately, I no longer have the time to invest in creating ship control sheets. When I was in college I had all the time in the world to work on such things, but now I just don't have any desire to fire up Illustrator in the evenings or weekends after having worked all day and all week long. Instead, I have found myself mostly playing solo Victory by Any Means campaigns, using Starmada X as a

ship design and combat system. For me, Starmada allows me to design and fight fairly quickly, when time allows.

However I am not completely 'gone' from B5W. I am sure that there will come a day sometime in this coming year when my creative juices will start to flow again and I will go in and create some more SCS. If and when I do, you will be the first to know because they will appear in the pages of a future issue of this e-zine.

So where does The Great Machine go from here? Earlier in the spring, Paul and I had decided that we were going to focus on releasing ships that we were interested in. Obviously, with Paul consumed (and rightfully so) with school and myself inundated with work, that just isn't a possibility anymore. So I will be relying on you, the Babylon 5 Wars community, to provide content. There is still some development on



the b5wars.net forums, but most of it just disappears. What I love to see is a lot of this material assembled and submitted upon 'completion' so that there can be a greater record of its existence, and so that it is more accessible in the long-term. I know that this is a pipe dream, but without your assistance the pages of The Great Machine are going to be recognizably barren of content. We have a few strong contributors, but the more people contributing the better and more varied the content will be.

So get out there and play the game, and then let us know about the new ships, tactics, and scenarios that you have found interesting.

This issue is filled with the variety of submission that has come in over the last several months. I hope that all of you enjoy this issue as much as the designer's enjoyed creating the content.

* * *

What kinds of B5W material can you possibly expect to see from me in this next year? Based on this past year's precedent, probably not a lot. As I mentioned, I am almost wholly a campaign player now, with a little Starmada on the side (though a few games of B5W will creep in here or there).

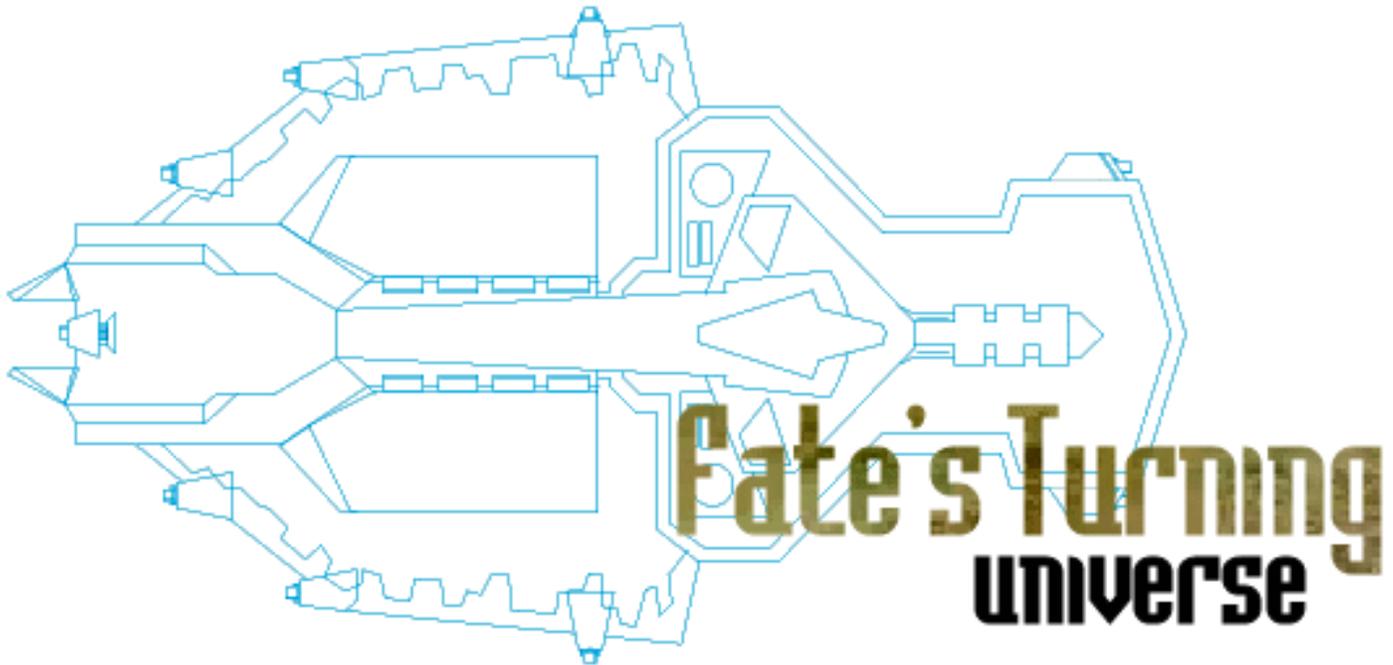
I do hope to get some more work done on my Star Trek Neo-Conversions at some point, finishing up some more of the major ships and getting them converted over to the new version. I had some fun with this project earlier in the year, but then ran out of steam.

I also really would like to go in and strip down the Planetside website to the bare minimums and make it more user-friendly for myself and others to update. I also want to change the coding to make it so that

the SCS are tied to the ships differently, so that we can have multiple ships from multiple authors all associated to the same ship (which will make alternate designs easier to add). It shouldn't be hard to do – but will mean that most of the site will be redone and some of the extra content lost, not that there is much there mind you.

Otherwise, expect to see some more Escalation Wars ships from me as I work to get some more Escalation Wars books finished in this next year. The books themselves, and all of the back history, will be available via VBAM Games once they are ready, but I will release B5W SCS separately on the site for those that would like to download them.

* * *



Fate's Turn Universe: Tolkid Preview

By Paul Brown

Prologue

"Come brothers and sisters, ready your arms against the twilight of our world. For centuries we have rebuilt this bastion of righteousness from the ruin the demons wrought. Now they have returned from the red sea, seeking once again to consume our world in fire! Turn your ears from their words, for they seek to deceive us. Avert your eyes from their likeness, for it is but an illusion. Hold fast to your faith in our cause and the emperor, and we will surely vanquish this infernal plague!"

-Address to the Tolkid Armed Forces

Fleet Composition

The Tolkid fleet is based heavily around the Destroyer-class vessel. Hundreds of such vessels were constructed before and during the war, and served in nearly every battle. These destroyers were both supported and led by a variety of other vessels. The effectiveness of this fleet model was due largely to the general versatile of the sole destroyer design.

Vol'Tron Destroyer

The workhorse of the Tolkid fleet, the Vol'Tron served throughout the war with little in the way of upgrades. Though outmatched by the Rawnjok Silvana, the Vol'Tron was arguably more versatile. Four medium guns covered all arcs of fire, with overlapping coverage to the front. Its perhaps one failing is its reliance on fighters and escort craft for the majority of its anti-fighter defense, possessing only one gatling cannon of its own. Though

the medium Autocannons can be used against fighters in a pinch.

Varella Cruiser

Entering service pre-war, the Varella was designed to lead groups of Tolkid ships into battle. Decently armed, it could be a serious threat to any similarly-sized vessel. A hangar with several flights of fighters provided allied vessels with decent protection against enemy attacks. While superior command and control capabilities allowed it to direct multiple ships in combat. Though an effective design, it could not stand up to heavier Rawnjok cruisers, which is reflected in the early losses. It was no until the introduction of the Dreadnought that a Tolkid ship could go toe-to-toe with advanced enemy designs.

Later on in the war, as newer vessels entered service the Varella was relegated to a support role providing fighter screens and light-anti ship fire. Many of the cruisers were upgraded with advanced

Lost Worlds

weaponry as it became available and served until the conclusion of the conflict.

Rolasha Dreadnought

Thought under development for years, the Rolasha did not enter service until after the war had commenced. Its role in the initial fleet model was to serve as the core of larger formations, directing other ships while providing deadly anti-ship fire. The nature of enemy Rawnjok tactics along with the introduction of newer designs quickly forced the Dreadnought into secondary roles, such as escorting command vessels or spearheading smaller attacks on enemy lines. Though heavily armed, the Rolasha was often surrounded by other vessels to safeguard it against Rawnjok fighter craft.

Tra'Pa Corvette

Introduced at roughly the same time as the Rolasha Dreadnought, the Tra'Pa was designed to safeguard largely vessels against enemy fighter attack. It possessed only a single autocannon for anti-ship fire, but also mounted four gatling cannons in relatively wide arcs. Though somewhat hampered by their extremely short range, they were relatively effective at downing Rawnjok fighter craft. For this reason and because of their relative fragility, they were often targeted by Rawnjok hunter-killers.

Fo'Lana Interceptor

Thought to be an excellent fighter craft at the time of its

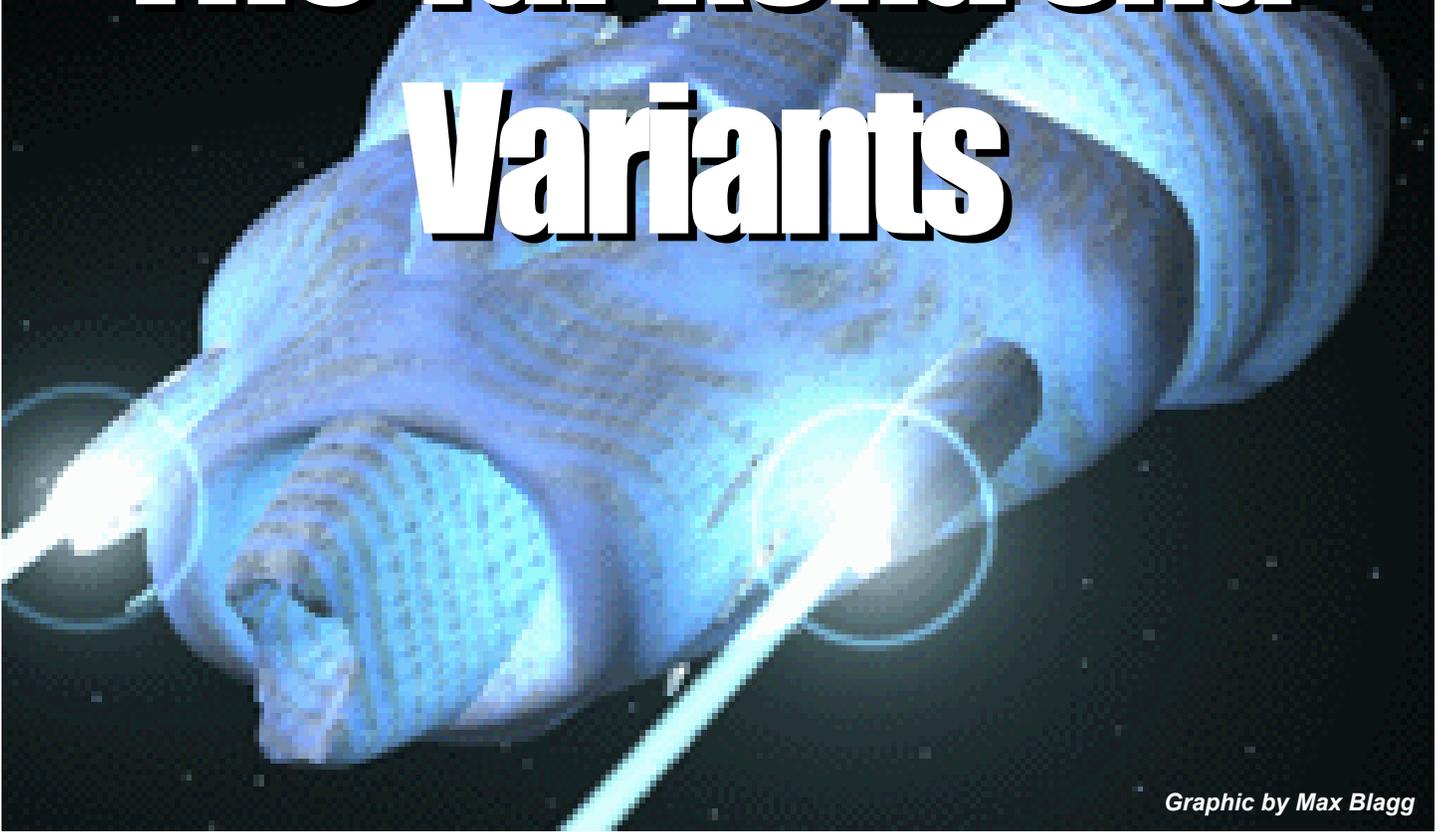
inception, the Fo'Lana proved inadequate in the face of superior Rawnjok fighters. This was due primarily to its reliance on a sole heavy cannon, whereas its Rawnjok contemporary used a variety of smaller guns supplemented by fire-and-forget missiles. Though decently armoured, the Interceptor could take only light punishment before being forced to withdraw. Never the less, it was employed throughout the war on fleet craft, particularly the Varella Cruiser.

* * *



**New Episodes of BATTLESTAR GALACTICA Begin January 6, 2006
on the Sci Fi Channel.**

The Tal-kona'sha Variants



Graphic by Max Blagg

More Midborns: Tal'kona-Sha Variants

By David Ainsworth

Introduction

Like most races, the Tal-kona'sha experiment with a variety of designs, not all of which prove successful or useful. The Tal-kona'sha have additional flexibility for a range of reasons, but primarily because they do not need to worry about crewing their ships, and many of their systems are built out of general-purpose nanomachines. Some variants can therefore be

handled through what amounts to software changes. Since the nanomachines require some time to reconfigure themselves, Tal-kona'sha ships cannot simply change function or equipment in the middle of a combat, but they can sometimes be reconfigured before a battle begins.

Many of the variants below, however, require support systems from the organic component of their ships, and therefore cannot be employed as modifications of existing ships. In effect, these variants operate like the standard variants of other races. The so-called software variants can be handled in the same way as ship enhancements, while variant ships

must be added to the fleet normally.

I also include a few new designs.

Variants

Lamprey Assault Craft Remora Variant (Common)

A substantial modification of the Remora repair craft, the Lamprey assault craft strikes fear into the hearts of those few beings who have survived a prior attack. Like the Remora, the Lamprey attaches itself to a ship, but unlike the Remora, the Lamprey attaches to enemy ships. Upon breaching the hull, the Lamprey can release any number of vicious attacks on the enemy vessel,

though generally the ship employs bioweapons or nanotech saboteurs in place of the customary marines. Potentially, the Lamprey can also be used to take captives, as it is one of the few TKS ships to possess passenger space. Presumably, if a Lamprey is sent to capture someone it employs larger robots to do so; such robots would be stored in the passenger/cargo space when not in use.

While the Lamprey retains the computer coordination system of the Remora, it cannot coordinate remotes—this additional system allows the ship to guide its “boarding parties” of nanobots to attack an enemy ship’s systems or crew. The Lamprey employs the standard boarding rules with modifications listed below. Destruction of this system prevents the Lamprey from conducting any boarding operations until the system is repaired.

Attachment: The Lamprey attaches to another unit (MCV or larger) using the breaching pod rules, but using the Lamprey’s accel/decel rating to determine the maximum difference in speed. While the Lamprey may attach to units with advanced armor, it may only employ bioweapons against such a unit (*Wreaking Havoc* is the only allowed mission, see below). Because of its size, the Lamprey blocks all fire aimed at the side of the ship to which it has attached (for HCVs or MCVs, it blocks fire against forward or aft), and blocks all weapon arcs from that side for the ship it attached to. If the ship it is attached to chooses to fire its blocked weapons at the Lamprey, the weapons automatically hit but they deal only half their normal damage to the Lamprey (round up), and any remaining damage is scored against the firing ship. (For flash-

mode weapons, the firing unit and the Lamprey also both suffer an additional attack at 25% normal damage.) Any incoming fire against that side of the ship rolls against the Lamprey; use the rules for Enormous units blocking lines of fire (so the firing ship may redirect OEW from the original target to the Lamprey). Treat the Lamprey as facing in the same direction as the ship it is attached to. The Lamprey’s weapons remain effective while it is attached, and use the standard arcs, unless of course the Lamprey is attached to an Enormous Unit, which would block fire in its direction. The Lamprey will not fire on a ship it is attached to, however, due to safety protocols. (Optional—in a battle where ramming is allowed, permit the Lamprey to override these protocols. It may automatically hit the ship it is attached to and any damage done is spread half and half to the two ships, as above.)

Procedure: While attached, the Lamprey may undertake marine missions using the following rules. (Note that the Lamprey has several additional missions it may undertake.) Skip the *Delivering the Marines* portion of the boarding action, unless the Lamprey is trying to attach to an Ancient-class ship, in which case it has a flat 50-50 chance of success. Apply no modifiers to rolls except as noted here.

Sabotaging a System:

Employ the standard rules, with a -2 bonus to the roll. Ignore mention of “marines” being killed or surviving. The Lamprey can undertake this mission every turn it remains attached so long as its nanocoordinator is operational.

Wreaking Havoc:

Instead of the standard options and results, the Lamprey releases a series of bioweapons into the enemy ship. Guided by a nanotech delivery system, these bioweapons are crude by Ancient standards but can be brutally effective. Generally, they incapacitate within the timeframe of a combat, although generally many affected by the attack will later die. Against Ancients, the Lamprey can employ bioweapons but must flood the enemy ship with them—to simulate this effect, the Lamprey loses 1d3 structure every time it makes such an attack on an Ancient-class vessel. Roll a d10 on the following table, with these modifiers: +3 if the defender is an Ancient. +1 if the defender is Gaim. -1 if the defending ship is an HCV. -2 if the defending ship is an MCV.

1 or below: Serious casualties among the crew reduce the ship’s initiative permanently by 1d6, and its EW by 1 point. In addition, the ship cannot fire weapons next turn, and one special officer (owner’s choice, if any are present) is incapacitated for the rest of the scenario.

2: Casualties across the ship interfere with maneuvering and target selection next turn. This ship suffers the effects of a C&C critical (1-8, sensors disrupted), and can only use half of its available thrust next turn. There is also a 50% chance that one special officer (owner’s choice, if any are present) is incapacitated for the rest of the scenario.

3: Casualties among the crew reduce the ship’s initiative permanently by 1d3. This effect is cumulative with other initiative reductions.

4: Substantial but brief trauma among the crew penalizes all the ship's d20 rolls next turn by 1 (includes initiative, attack rolls, ramming rolls, recovery from unprepared status, and rolls for critical damage). Apply a +1 or -1 as appropriate, whichever penalizes the ship.

5: Disruption to crew efficiency reduces the ship's initiative by 1d6 next turn.

6-8: The bioweapons spread but have not impaired the ship's performance yet. Further *Wreaking Havoc* rolls against this ship on future turns are made with a -1 bonus as the toxins begin to take effect.

9+: The current (or remaining) bioweapon payload of this Lamprey proves ineffective against this target race. This Lamprey may make no further *Wreaking Havoc* attacks against any ships of this race in the present scenario. Enemy ships of a different race may still be vulnerable.

Rescuing a Captive:

In the rare cases where the Lamprey needs to execute this mission, it must employ robotic marines. Use the standard rules for this mission, including all normal modifiers for such missions. If the Marines are "killed" the robots are considered destroyed. If the Lamprey's structural replacement system is still operational it can replace the robots at a cost of 4 structure boxes.

Deactivating a Satellite:

The Lamprey is too large to attach to an OSAT.

Capturing a Ship:

Although the Lamprey cannot capture enemy ships, it can use this boarding option to try to eliminate or incapacitate the crew or shut down the ship completely. Compute the defending ship's number of "Marines" normally. When this number is reduced to 0, the ship is considered incapacitated. Roll 1d10 each turn to determine how many "attacking Marines" are effective this turn. Use the normal rules (with standard modifiers) to determine how many defenders are killed this turn. Attacking marines cannot be killed, but the attacks cease if the Lamprey is destroyed or forced to detach.

Hungry Killer Whale Heavy Gunship

Killer Whale Variant (Rare)

An upgunned Killer Whale, the so-called "Hungry" Killer Whale removes all but one Molecular Concentrator to provide room for a second Cone Focus Beam. While the ship proved quite effective at killing a selected enemy craft, and was slightly better at defending itself against enemy fighters, it provided very little integral support to a larger fleet. Ultimately, the Tal-kona'sha decided that simply fielding more ships was an adequate way to destroy specific targets. A few heavy gunships were kept around in case it was necessary to produce more against some specific threat—for example, if some other race found a way to disrupt the combined fire mode of the Molecular Concentrator.

Burning Whale System Monitor

Humpback Variant (Uncommon)

Designed to maximize close-range firepower, this Humpback

variant replaces the Molecular Concentrators with Plasma Flamers. The extra power this releases for use allows the Humpback to recharge its Flamers quite rapidly. The design never really fit the Tal-kona'sha fleet doctrine but it proved useful as a support ship for Tal-kala'na-based fleets.

White Whale Strike Cruiser

Grey Whale Variant (Common)

With the Grey Whale frequently deployed on its own for various missions, the Molecular Concentrator battery proved something of a detriment, allowing the Grey Whale to engage at long range but leaving the ship hard-pressed to destroy enemy cruisers quickly. By stripping all the forward armament and replacing those guns with Cone Focus Beams, the Tal-kona'sha produced a variant of the ship with considerable crunch power, but at the cost of half the light armament and most of the ship's fleet support capability.

Kalona'sa Battleship

Kalona Variant (Rare)

The Tal-kona'sha experimented with mounting Heavy Cone Focus Beams on their largest ships, but only the Kalona proved a stable mount, effectively carrying two spinal mounted Heavy Cone Focus Beams on its ventral and dorsal sides. The huge mounts left the ship with no other forward weapons and no room for its side-mounted Discharge Arrays. While the ship became even more deadly at long range, it required considerable escort to protect itself against close-range attack. The spinal mounts actually required surgery on the ship, and could not be replaced through the Structural Replacement System,

although a Remora could regenerate them if necessary. Given the vulnerability of these weapons to damage and the difficulty in installing and maintaining a permanent external system, the Kalona'sa remains a rare variant.

Orkala'sa Ion Bombarder

Orkala'na Variant (Uncommon)

The Tal-kona'sha rarely rely on ballistic support, given that their Molecular Concentrators can outrange such weapons easily when deployed in numbers. Nevertheless, sometimes the Tal-kona'sha want to deploy such weapons without relying on a dreadnought or system defender. In such cases they deploy this variant. The ship is as fragile as an Orkala'na but also suffers from a lack of close-in defense, and it is only employed as a fleet support ship. The ship lacks the size for Advanced Ion Torpedo launchers, so it mounts ordinary Ion Torpedo launchers instead.

Molecular Concentrator Variants

The nanotech of the Tal-kona'sha means that there's not much difference between a software and a hardware modification. The Tal-kona'sha developed several software modifications for their Molecular Concentrators, based on their projections of possible alien technology and their encounters with Ancients. None of these modifications proved generally useful, but most of their ships are programmed and capable of switching over their Molecular Concentrators into other modes. Normally this requires a considerable amount of time, so these modifications must be in place

before a combat begins. Treat these modifications as weapons enhancements. A Tal-kona'sha ship's Molecular Concentrators are linked so all of them must operate in the same mode. The default mode is indicated on all Tal-kona'sha sheets.

Shield Piercing Molecular Concentrators

Developed not so much to deal with EM and Gravitic shields as to punch through Thought Shields, the Shield Piercing software modification adjusts multiple concentrator fire so that instead of the beams reinforcing each other, they strike the enemy shield simultaneously across a fairly wide arc. Such fire degrades shield effectiveness.

A single Shield Piercing Molecular Concentrator has the same stats as the basic weapon. The modifications happen when the weapon is fired in combined mode. Instead of the standard additions to damage and bonuses to hit, apply the following bonuses instead: Add +5 damage for every concentrator beyond the first and a +1 bonus to hit for every 2 concentrators beyond the first (so 2, 4, or 6 grant +1/+2/+3 to hit). In addition, each weapon beyond the first adds 2d10 damage which applies only for purposes of overcoming shielding. In cases of EM or Gravitic shields or the like,

subtract their factor from this extra damage first; for other shields (like thought shields), apply this special damage to them first. If the shield factors are overcome, disregard any remaining "bonus" damage of this type and apply the full "regular" damage normally. Systems which absorb damage (tendrils, Andromedan Power Absorber panels, etc) do not count as shields for purposes of this modification.

Sustained Molecular Concentrators

This modification is unpopular in part because it only applies to Concentrators on a single ship. Only a few ships are capable of employing it effectively. A ship configured to use Sustained Molecular Concentrators cannot combine fire with any other ship, nor can any other ship combine fire with it.

A single Sustained Molecular Concentrator is no different from the basic weapon, and cannot fire in sustained mode. When firing in combined fire mode, Sustained Molecular Concentrators automatically sustain fire against the target. Ignore the normal Molecular Concentrator combined fire rules, and apply the following modifiers instead based on the total number of Concentrators firing. Remember that all Concentrators must be in arc, and on a single TKS ship. For

<i>Number of Concentrators</i>	<i>Effect (non-cumulative)</i>
2	Weapon is Sustained (2)
3	Sustained (2), +1 to hit, +1d10+2 damage
4	Sustained (2), +2 to hit, +1d10+7 damage
5	Sustained (2), +3 to hit, +2d10+9 damage
6	Sustained (3), +3 to hit, +2d10+12 damage

sustained fire to function normally on the second turn of fire, only one Molecular Concentrator must be kept in arc. All Molecular Concentrators fired in sustained mode must be shut down for one turn after firing is complete.

Ranged Combination Molecular Concentrators

The result of an attempt to coordinate multiple Concentrator fire when the coordinating ships are farther away from each other, the Ranged Combination protocol proved possible but inaccurate, though it does offer a few interesting tactical possibilities. This protocol might be used if the Tal-kona'sha are forced to engage while their fleet is scattered, or when fighting an enemy

like the Triad which possesses a proximity weapon capable of savaging a fleet of ships which keeps within 1 hex of each other.

The Molecular Concentrators of any ship under this protocol can combine fire with others farther than 1 hex away. Indeed, the two ships can be up to 50 hexes away and still combine fire, so long as both ships are employing this protocol. Ignore the standard rules and apply these instead:

All Molecular Concentrators combining fire must be in arc of the target ship, but may be aimed at different target profiles. The combined fire is computed using the average EW (rounded down) of all ships combining fire. Range penalties are computed based on the range to the firing ship farthest from

the target. The Tal-kona'sha player may choose which profile of the enemy ship the fire strikes so long as at least one firing ship faces that profile. For every Molecular Concentrator firing beyond the first, add +1d10+5 damage, to a maximum of +5d10+25. Subtract 2 from the chance to hit for every ship beyond the first which is firing in combined mode, unless all ships combining fire are within 1 hex of each other, in which case there is no penalty but no bonus to hit either.

* * *

Editor's Note: Thanks to Adam Keane for converting this article's conversion notes into actual SCS!

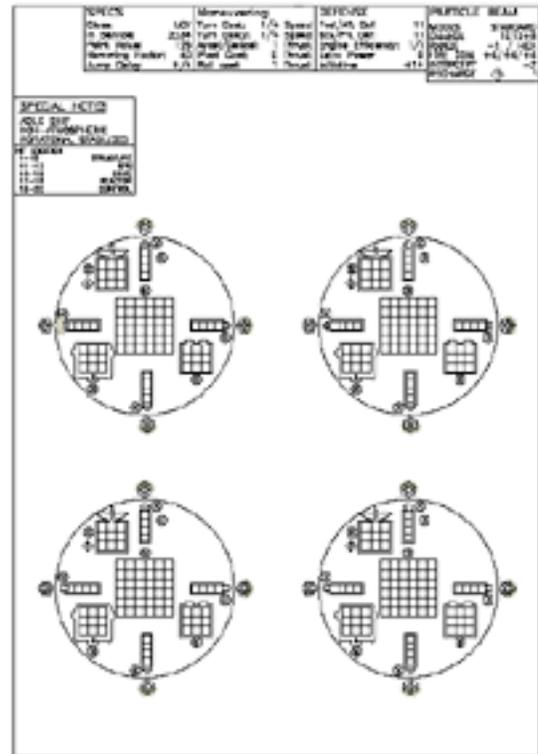
Spha-kar Allegiance

By Fred Moehrle

This is something I whipped up for a campaign I started running solo a few years back to provide a background for a RPG using the B5 universe as a background, but no one I game with was interested. Now after almost 6 years of running the same ship and crew its gotten to the point where a felt like making up a sector of space using an old hex sheet lying around and modifying the old Traveler rules from GDW. Then I felt the need to make up some races to hang out and be encountered. Since then, it's snowballed to this point.

This is the third race I've started to work on. A recent computer upgrade has allowed me to make PDFs from ACAD drawings. I often leave off the Icon recognition box and the turn cost/delay charts 'cause I haven't felt the need for personal consumption. I hope the thing is not too crude for you're tastes.

Special Rules: Rotational Stabilization. This ship suffers no negative modifier for pivoting. The capability to fire normally while pivoted is hard wired into the sensor system.



The Spha-kar vessel is accompanied by a conjectural Mitoc Destroyer, also designed and presented by Fred Moehrle, in this issue's attachments.



Antarean Ships and Technology

By Robert Balsley

Editors' Note: Robert Balsley submitted this update to his popular Antarean fleet set. The original articles for the Antareans can be found in issues 14 and 15 of The Great Machine. Enjoy!

Antarean Technology Appendix

Orbital Projector

During the development and improvement of the Antarean's primary defensive weapon, it was discovered that some of the gravitic generators inside the orbital control system would miss-align and cause the smaller orbitals (9 structure or less) to simply drift off in random directions, originally seeing this as a problem it was corrected. However a somewhat brazen Antarean scientist Kyjor Xykill wanted to spend more time investigating this problem and as to why it occurred. The solution was easily fixed by simply routing more power to the control

More Antareans: Technical Appendix and New Units

system. He then discovered that the problem occurred due to the interaction of the multiple gravitic systems inside the controller so he toyed around with changing the frequencies of the generators to see if this would allow him to fix the problem with out the extra power. The results were staggering he discovered in most of his tests the orbitals would double their distance from the controller and then be propelled in random directions with great speed immediately seeing the possible offensive applications this might bring to the already useful technology he began working on ways of controlling the path of the orbitals and after some time he was successful and constructed a prototype to submit to the naval research comity . The comity evaluated his work and dismissed the idea because it would eventually leave the ship in question vulnerable to attack. And so he went back to work to try and fix this newfound problem. The solution was simple. By dividing the control system to function in a defensive mode and offensive mode at the same time by splitting the control rank and using the system he invented to stabilize the extra orbitals . And so he resubmitted his work and the comity was impressed however being bogged down in discussions on the Wycrom project the new technology was put on hold. In the year 2264 Kyjor Xykill died of natural causes and sadly never saw the technology implemented. However in 2265 the naval research comity was able to commission a prototype of his

offensive/defensive system and install it in a vessel they christened the Xykill after its creator.

In game terms the orbital projector operates as controller and projector its control rating divided into offensive and defensive ratings the system also allowed the control of two sizes of orbitals something never done before the smaller orbitals used offensively and the larger more stable orbitals used defensively.

Projecting occurs during Ballistic stage and has an effective range of 6 hexes plus the speed of the ship projecting it. Hits are resolved in standard mode with the damage being equal to the armor plus the number of hits the orbitals have *example: an orbital with 6 armor and 9 hits would do a 15 point standard hit*. Due to the nature of the projector only orbitals with 6 armor can be projected in this way. Units with all the same size orbitals can change the orbitals from offensive to defensive. For ships it takes 1 turn to change any number of orbitals from defense to offense or vice versa.

Example: turn 1 a Hyperion cruiser fires a medium pulse cannon and destroys 2 of the ships 4 defensive orbitals and impacts the ship once, the Antarean player decides to launch an orbital next turn but also change 2 of the remaining 3 offensive orbitals to defense and would be without those 2 orbitals for a full turn so he would have them for defense on turn #3.

Antarean Officers

Expert Control Officer

This officer is a crack control expert and technician and is often in great demand in the antarean fleet for his ability to keep the control system running at peak efficiency and getting orbitals from what seems like nowhere.

Location: Orbital Control ,Orbital Projector or Orbital Constructor.

Availability: Antarean only

Cost: 25% of the ships base cost

Limitations: Not available for fighters or ships of less than HCV size. (no medium or LCV's)but may be purchased for OSAT's or Bases, no more than two may be purchased per fleet or 1 per ship/base.

Function: Provides a +1 to the ship/

bases control rating , if the ship has two ratings such as offensive and defensive the +1 is to either not both ratings (must be chosen at the time of purchase) plus he also grants one extra orbital for that ship up to the maximum size orbital that ship can control. And a further -2 to all critical rolls for the system he is in.

Plus chose only **one** of the following two benefits:

1.) **Speeds Orbital construction** up by 1 turn for 1 turn only. This will affect all constructors on the ship so if the ship or base has 2 both are speeded up for the round.(example: constructing a single 9 hit orbital is once per turn, using this ability would construct two 9 hit orbitals on that turn. An orbital that takes 2 turns to construct would only take a single turn) this ability may only be used once per battle.

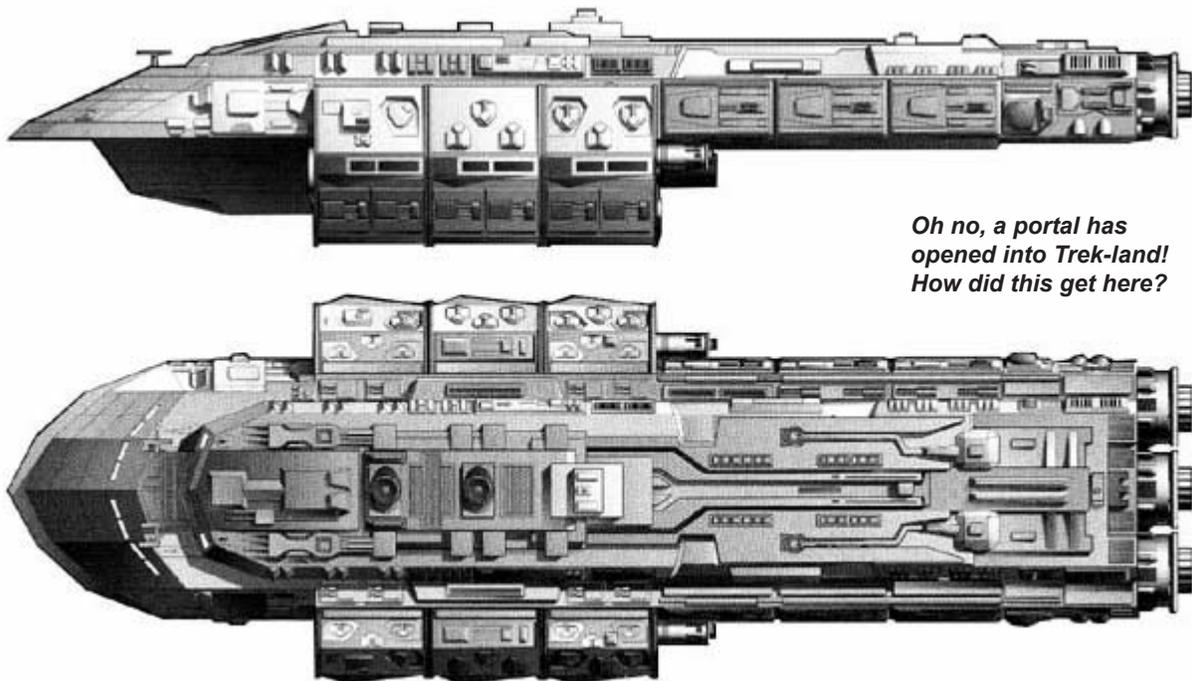
2.) Assigning orbitals **after** damage and location has been rolled this ability may be used twice per battle.

* * *

9 Out of 10 Spoo Farmers are Depressed, Study Shows

(AP) TUZINOR - A new Interstellar Alliance medical study, published today in the Minbari "You Need to Know This Now" Journal of Stuff, reports that 9 out of every 10 spoo farmers suffer from serious clinic depression. The study links this abnormally high depression rate to the inordinate amount of forlorn sighing that spoo are known for.

"This problem isn't going to go away," says Alliance agricultural liaison D'irt. "As long as there is a demand for quality spoo, there will be depressed spoo farmers."



Oh no, a portal has opened into Trek-land! How did this get here?

Art by Scott Bieser, (C) Paramount Pictures and Interplay Entertainment Corp.



The Hydran Kingdoms: *From SFB to B5W*

Fighters and Fusions

By Geoffrey Stano, Jeff Perkins,
and Christian Meador

THE HYDRAN KINGDOM

When talking about the background of Hydrans, the first

image to remember is that of triads, triples, and threes, which is evident in their bodies, their sexes, the children they have, even their government! Hydrans, who might partly remind us of the old science fiction image of “Bug Eyed Monsters”, would be most content on the gas giant planets of our solar system, like Saturn, Neptune, or Uranus, as they breathe the methane atmosphere on these planets. Hydrans can even rely on

methane to provide some of their foodstuffs, which would enable them to remain alive on just about any gas giant with a methane atmosphere for a constrained timeframe. Most of the other Star Trek races would find a methane world very disagreeable, if not agonizingly fatal without bringing along their own space suits. Other races think that the Hydran homeworld must have less density and gravity than planets like Jupiter, which would give their homeworld less substantial gravitic pressures at the surface. Hydrans are roughly 4 feet, 4 and 1/2 inches tall, on average. Their bodies are shaped like stocky round (metal) drums, with splayed feet pointing in three directions. Eyes, ears, (and mouths!) come in a more normal standard of two, mounted at the top of the drum shape. Around the outer top edge of this drum, extend three tentacle appendages, of equivalent size and length. The Hydrans’ lack of height handicaps them to an extent in ground combat, but their robust spacefaring ships, combined with the tenaciousness of their fleet captains has gained them grudging appreciation from their enemies. The sexes of the Hydrans are comprised of a Male, Female, and Matron, and the biological deposits of all three sexes, by necessity, must be emplaced in the Matron in order to bring forth the births, which result in triplets. Hydran religion is a lot like that of the ancient Romans, with plenty of minor household gods, along with more prominent gods, which cycle with the rise and fall of various political factions. These factions include the economically successful merchant associations, a strong bureaucracy run by the Civil Service, and the proliferate (like rabbits!) Royal Family, from which the ruler of the Hydran Kingdom, the

Monarch, comes. The King can be anything from being an absolute totalitarian dictator, to being nothing more than a figurehead for either of the other two factions, depending on the ever-cycling strengths of each of these factions. Matrons serve only a genetic function, as they have too little intelligence for anything else. Surprisingly, a majority of the ground troops, fighter pilots, and work forces are comprised not of the males, but of the females! Males tend to fill out the science, technological, and command functions. On occasion, however, females have been able to rise to command positions, and once in a while, become Queen! While the Lyran and Klingon races have little use for the gas giant planets of the Hydrans, sharing habitats within a solar system has never been tolerated by any of these combatants. The Hydran Kingdom is located near the very rim of our galactic arm, bounded to the left by the feline Lyrans, and bounded on the north and partly on the east by the Klingon Empire. Beyond the Klingon Empire to the northeast of the Hydrans lie the United Federation of Planets and other entities east of the Federation. At one point, a combined Klingon-Lyran offensive conquered most of the Hydran Kingdom, but they missed three colony planets in their haste. The Hydran merchant associations fled to these planets, and over 40 years, worked to research better weapons to refit a new fleet, tasked to throw off the long occupation. Finally, this hard work paid off in the creation of the two new Fusion Beams, a Gatling Defense Phaser, the Intermediate Phaser, and Stinger Gatling Phaser. Now these colony worlds set out to launch a new fleet built with the weapons from that research, in order to free the rest of

their peoples, still groaning under the Klingon-Lyran occupation. They succeeded in liberating the rest of the Hydran Kingdom, all the way back to the Kingdom's original borders.

The Hydran fleets are composed of two main types of ships, aside from specialty role ships. The first and slightly older group has plenty of firepower, both in the weapons and swarming fighters it brings to any battle. The weakness is in the surprisingly short range of the Fusion Beam, which tends to attenuate very quickly. This older group utilizes a molecular class main weapon called a Fusion Beam, which compensates for the short range by being very potent, especially when extra power is added to overload the weapon. It is not usual, but possible, for a Fusion Beam to be double-overloaded, which causes damage to the ship as well as destroying the weapon system itself. This group makes the most use of Hydran Stinger fighters, which follow up behind the fusion warships. The Fusion-armed warships weaken or knock down the enemy's deflector shields, and the Stingers attempt to deliver the finishing blow, or coup de grace. The other main ship type was built around a new weapon derived from fusion beam technology, the Hellbore Torpedo. For simplicity, the Hydrans reused the base hulls from the fusion ships, replacing the fusion beam with the new weapon. The Hellbore power requirements forced the Hydrans to enlarge the reactors on the smaller ships, while on the cruisers and up, the Hydrans had to augment the main reactor with auxiliary reactors. The development of the Hellbore Torpedo finally gave the Hydrans the long range weapon they had always lacked, but the reactor problem meant these new

ships had to severely curtail the use of onboard Stinger fighters. The smaller ships had to forego Stingers completely. The Hydrans working on the Hellbore chanced upon a way to fire the weapon in two different modes, which improved its flexibility in combat. However, after a series of enveloping mode test firings on shielded ship hulks, the Hydran scientists were happily surprised to find that the enveloping mode completely ignored the deflector shield damage reduction ratings!

The most dangerous Hydran fleet is the combined arms fleet, with ballistic Hellbore ships like the Dragoon and Knight in the rear providing long range fire support with "close and hose" fusion ships like the Ranger and Lancer in the fore, along with plenty of Stinger fighters, from carriers if necessary. This fleet can strike hard, with potent firepower from almost any angle.

Weapons & Technologies

New Weapon Mode: Enveloping

The new Enveloping damage mode is utilized by the Hydran Hellbore Torpedo. Enveloping weapons, in one way or another, surround their target and implode, damaging all outer sections of the target. When attacked by an Enveloping weapon, roll for the total damage normally. Afterwards, divide the total by the number of shield projections on the target. It does not matter if the projection is active or can absorb any damage. For units without shield projections, divide the total damage by the number of

sections (i.e.: 4 for Capital Ships, 2 for Heavy Combat Vessels and Medium Ships, and 1 for Light Combat Vessels). This damage is then resolved as a flash attack against the target only. There is no collateral flash damage to surrounding units.

The Hellbore Torpedo has additional characteristics, but uses the basic Enveloping rules. The additions are listed in the Hellbore Torpedo description. The basic Enveloping rules are provided here in case future weapons utilize this style of attack.

Special Hydran Rules

Fighter Fusion Beam Reloading

Hydran fighters that utilize fusion beams can have additional power charges loaded onto the fighter if its current charges have been used. This ability is included in the cost of the fighter. In order to do this, the fighter must land aboard a ship that carried fusion armed fighters. If the ship only carried Stinger-Hs, it is unable to re-arm the fusions.

Once aboard, two power charges can be loaded on a fighter per turn. For the Stinger-2, this would take two turns. In addition, each charge requires one point of power expended by the carrier. For the aforementioned Stinger-2, this would be four total power. This is on a per fighter basis. Therefore, a Ranger with nine Stinger-2s would have to pay 36 power to reload every power charge.

To help aid in combat operations, all Hydran carriers can begin arming a second loading of power charges for each fighter. These are stored in the hanger and are lost when the specific hanger box is destroyed. This reload storage allows a Hydran ship to pay for the Stinger's ammunition early on before

the Stingers return.

Hydran fighters utilizing the light hellbore torpedo follow the same procedures. However, a light hellbore power charge requires two turns of hanger operations. In addition, the light hellbore torpedo requires two power to reload from the carrier.

Intermediate Phaser

Class: Molecular

Modes: Raking (8), Sustained

Until the development of the Hellbore Torpedo, the Intermediate Phaser was the longest ranged weapon in the Royal Hydran Fleet. It lacks the crunch power of a Fusion Beam and its power was often diverted to overloading the Fusions at close range. However, it is a versatile system capable of defending a ship from hostile weapons fire or attack shuttles as well as being highly useful in following up on a successful Fusion Beam attack.

Light Phaser

Class: Molecular

Mode: Standard

This small phaser weapon saw extensive use aboard many smaller Hydran craft as it served as an excellent weapon against any type of target. While not as long-ranged as the heavier Intermediate Phaser, Hydran combat doctrine meant that most ships equipped with this weapon would not need the extra range. A few specialty classes, such as the Cavalier Heavy Carrier, utilized this weapon as it was more capable for intercept capabilities.

Gatling Phaser

Class: Molecular

Mode: Standard

The ultimate expression in Hydran phaser weaponry is the Gatling Phaser. This weapon housed three miniaturized Point Defense Phasers. Gifted with wide arcs, Gatling Phasers were capable of providing a large amount of intercept for Hydran ships. In addition, the high rate of fire negated the low damage of the basic Point Defense Phaser and allowed the Gatling to be extremely dangerous in stripping shields away from opponents and destroying small attack shuttles.

Stinger Gatling Phaser

Class: Molecular

Mode: Standard

Seeing as the Hydrans were the pre-eminent users of attack fighters, it comes as no surprise that their Stinger fighters eventually were upgraded to use a small gatling phaser. The Stinger Gatling, as it was known, combined with the Fighter Fusion Beams made the Stinger-2 fighter one of the single most deadly attack craft in the quadrant. Their ferocity was augmented by the fact that the Hydrans often deployed many Stingers in combat.

Fusion Beam

Class: Molecular

Modes: Raking, Sustained

The Hydran Fusion Beam is a very powerful weapon that generates its power from directing a small fusion reaction against a target. While incredibly powerful, the fusion beam is limited in its range. The Fusion Beam evolved out of an earlier version and has since

become the primary weapon Hydran ships. Even as more advanced systems were deployed, specifically the Hellbore Torpedo, the Fusion remained the dominant weapon. The Hydrans preferred to stick to their combat doctrine of utilizing very powerful short-ranged ships, supported by heavily armed combat fighters.

The Fusion Beam has several other characteristics that set it aside from many other weapons in use. The first is that the weapon must spend a turn cooling down after firing. This is to prevent the weapon from destroying itself. However, the weapon's power may be used as the Hydran captain sees fit during the cool down period. The Fusion Beam may also be used, at greater effect, with more power, although this has some liabilities. By doubling the basic power requirement, the Fusion can nearly double its damage output. However, doing this forces an automatic critical check on the overloaded Fusion Beam at a +3 penalty. The cool down period must still be observed. The most devastating attack a Fusion armed ship can initiate uses a suicide overload Fusion Beam. Here, the weapon requires triple the basic power for a massive increase in damage. The down side is that the attack is quite damaging to the firing unit as well. For every Fusion Beam that is fired as a suicide overload, the Fusion Beam is automatically destroyed (bulkheads cannot be used) and the ship suffers 2d10 standard damage attack to the side that the Fusion Beam is attached to. This collateral damage cannot be blocked by bulkheads, but is affected by armor. A Ranger, which fires all four of its Fusion Beams as suicide overloads will lose all four Fusions and take four separate "attacks" of

2d10 damage to the forward section. Suicide overloads were typically used by ships that knew they only had one shot or if a single ship were used to isolate and cripple a key enemy unit.

Light Fusion Beam

Class: Molecular

Modes: Raking, Sustained

The Light Fusion Beam is a smaller version of the standard Fusion Beam. Weapons of this type were utilized aboard smaller Hydran vessels, particular the Hunter Frigate class. The main reason was due to the stress involved in mounting a full Fusion Beam and less available power to fully utilize a Fusion Beam. While slightly less damaging, the Light Fusion Beam is just as volatile as its larger cousin.

Fighter Fusion Beam

Class: Molecular

Mode: Standard

The Fighter Fusion Beam was first deployed aboard the Stinger-1 fighter, which turned an otherwise unremarkable attack shuttle into a dangerous anti-ship unit. Unlike the ship mounted versions, the Fighter Fusion does not have any overload features and suffers from tremendous range restrictions. The weapon is so powerful that the fighter must carry power charges to fire the weapon. Typically, the maximum range is 3 hexes. However, the Stinger pilot may elect to use both power charges to extend the range of the shot at the expense of total damage.

Hellbore Torpedo

Class: Ballistic + Plasma

Mode: Enveloping + Flash

The Hellbore Torpedo is an outgrowth of the Hydran's fusion technology. In their attempts to increase the range of the basic Fusion Beam, the Hydrans came across a system that indeed had vastly improved range, but was very effective in damaging an opponent's shields. Instead of firing a beam that initiates a fusion reaction, a very small fusion charge is fired at a target. Upon reaching the target, this charge releases a large quantity of plasma that implodes against the target. Against targets with shield projections, the result is amplified, causing the weakest shield to take twice as much damage as the other shield projections.

Hellbores have several special features. While they are considered ballistic weapons, and can be intercepted as such, they are resolved during the normal weapons fire resolution stage and can be resolved in any order they firing player sees fit with other weapons. Each Hellbore that hits rolls for the total damage it causes. Unlike normal enveloping weapons, all Hellbore damage, *from a single ship*, is combined into a single total. This total is divided by the number of shield projections plus one. Each shield projection then takes this damage, while the weakest (at the moment the hellbore is resolved) takes this damage twice. All fractions are rounded down and any left over points of damage are scored against the weakest shield. If there is no weakest shield, or several equally weak shield projections, score the normal damage to each shield projection. Then take the remaining damage and divide it equally among the remaining

weakest shield projections. Any remaining points are distributed at the target player's choice.

Against shielded targets, Hellbores ignore the armor effect benefits of shield deflectors. However, Hellbores are affected by gravitic and EM shields, as they operate differently from deflector shields and shield projections. Against units that do not use shield projections, all Hellbore damage is rolled normally and then this total is resolved as a standard enveloping attack.

Finally, Hellbores have the option to fire "directly". Instead of imploding against their target, the Hellbores score damage against the facing shield in standard mode (without the plasma effect). This standard mode shot does *not* ignore the damage reduction of a facing deflector shield. The Hellbore is reduced in actual strength, but allows a Hellbore armed ship the ability to weaken a facing shield to maximize the effect of its remaining Hellbores.

Example 1 (Only 1 weakest shield): A Hydran Knight Destroyer fires two Hellbore Torpedoes at an opposing Klingon cruiser during the ballistic weapons launch segment. Instead of hitting during the ballistic weapons resolution phase, the hellbores hit during the normal weapons resolution phase, but in the order of the firing player. During the normal weapons resolution phase, the Knight fires its Intermediate Phaser at the Klingon and elects to resolve its Hellbores after the phaser hit and after rolling all three weapons hit. The Klingon has four shield projections and the port projection is facing the Knight. Due to previous damage, the port shield projection can only absorb 10 damage. The phaser causes 20 damage, of which 10 is absorbed and another two is

blocked by the facing deflector shield, with a rating of two. That means a single, eight point raking volley hits the port side of the Klingon. Now, the two Hellbores are resolved, doing 4d10+8 damage apiece. After rolling the totals are 19 and 34 damage, which are combined into a single hellbore volley of 53 damage. The Klingon uses four shield projections, so the damage each projection takes is $(53 / (4+1)) = 10.6$, which is rounded to 10 damage. Each projection then takes 10 damage. However, the port shield, which was reduced to zero by the phaser hit is now the weakest shield and will take this damage twice (total of 20 damage). Also, there are three left over points that are applied against the weakest projection, bringing the total to 23 damage through the port shield projection. Normally, this would be reduced to 21 due to the two point rating on the deflector shield, but this is ignored by hellbores. This means a 23 point plasma, flash hit is applied against the Klingon's port side. If the aft projection could only absorb 5 of the 10 damage, it would have received a 5 point plasma, flash hit.

Example 2 (Ship does not use shield projections): The same Knight Destroyer fires against a Brakiri Avioki and both hellbores are assumed to have hit for the same damage. Unlike the first example, the Avioki does not use shield projections. Therefore, the Knight does not need to fire its phaser to weaken a shield. Also, since the Avioki does not use shield projections, the enveloping damage is totaled (53) and divided by the number of outer sections (4) for 13.25 damage, rounded to 13. Each section then takes 13 plasma, flash damage with the 1 left over point scored against a section of the

Brakiri's choosing.

Example 3 (Target has multiple weakest shield projections): In this example the Knight Destroyer has no phasers available and the Klingon cruiser's port and aft shield projections have 8 damage capacity left apiece. This is less than in the starboard or forward projections and therefore they are tied for consideration to be the weakest shield. The Knight has two options. The first is to fire both hellbores normally, knowing that with two shield projections being weakest, the overall damage will be distributed over two shield projections. If this is done and the damage totals from *Example 1* are used, a total of 53 points of hellbore damage are scored. As in *Example 1* each projection takes $53 / (4+1) = 10.6$ damage, rounded to 10 damage since there are four projections. The remaining 13 damage is divided by two since there are two weakest shield projections for 6.5, rounded down to 6 damage. Therefore, each projection takes 10 damage from the basic enveloping effect. This causes 2 damage points to hit the cruiser on the port and aft sections as those facing shield projections only had 8 capacity and the deflector shield damage reduction is ignored. In addition to this 2 damage the port and aft sections take 6 more damage (total of 8) for both being the weakest shield. A final odd point is allocated to the aft section at the Klingon player's option. Therefore the port side takes 8 plasma, flash damage while the aft takes 9 plasma, flash damage.

The second option was for the Knight to fire one hellbore in standard mode and the other in enveloping mode. Using the same stats for the Klingon's shields and assuming both hellbores hit, the

following occurs. The Knight player chooses to resolve the standard mode hellbore first to try and weaken the facing port shield. In standard mode, the hellbore only does 2d10+4 damage for 11 damage. This hits the port shield projection, which absorbs 8. The remaining 3 damage has 2 blocked by the facing deflector shield as standard mode hellbores do not ignore deflectors and leaves one point of standard mode damage. Initially this seems ineffective as no damage was scored to the ship. However, instead of having two weakest shields, the Klingon's port shield is the weakest due to the standard mode hellbore. The second enveloping hellbore does 4d10+8 damage and rolls 34. Each projection takes $34 / (4+1) = 6.8$, rounded to 6 damage. This results in 6 damage hitting the Klingon's port side as the port projection has been dropped by the standard mode

hellbore and because the enveloping hellbore ignores the deflection shield's damage reduction. Now, the port shield takes an additional 10 damage because it is the weakest shield (6 from 34/5 plus 4 leftover points). The enveloping hellbore now does $6+10=16$ plasma, flash damage to the port side, which doubles the amount had both hellbores been fired in enveloping mode.

Light Hellbore Torpedo

Class: Ballistic + Plasma
Mode: Enveloping + Flash

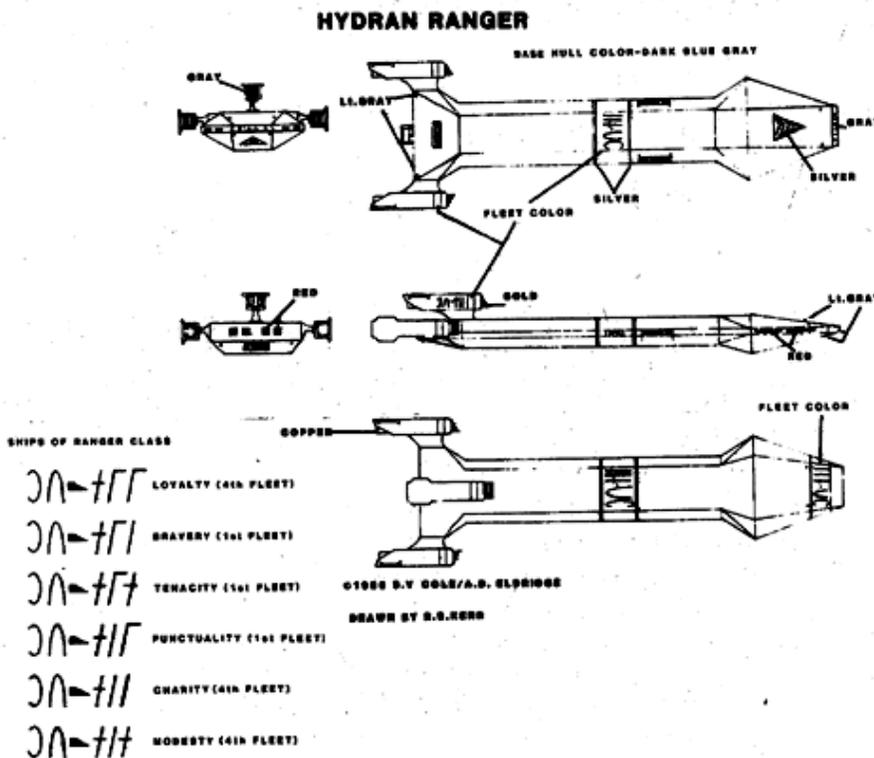
The standard Hellbore Torpedo is very difficult to mount to very small craft. The Hydrans developed a smaller version of the Hellbore to be used aboard light combat vessels and a few specialty classes of Stinger fighters. While less damaging than the larger

version, the weapon can be very potent aboard the small and maneuverable Stinger fighter.

FUSION SHIPS

Ranger Cruiser

The Ranger Cruiser was the first major Hydran capital ship, which originally was technology test bed designed for the introduction of the new Fusion Beams and replaced the obsolete Grenadier cruiser. This design also incorporated the first of the new Stinger fighters. Hydran Stinger tactical doctrine swiftly centered on immediately following a combat pass by a Ranger as the Stinger weapons are too weak to penetrate fresh deflector shields, by themselves. Opponents have to choose between the onrushing Ranger or the following Stingers. Typically, Hydran opponents have only enough firepower for one or the other. One design feature the Kingdom's captains quickly grew to admire were the bulkheads, which help the fusion ships endure the opponent's fire as it closes. Once the Ranger manages to get close enough, it explodes into a flurry of phasers and fusion beams. However, the fusion's weakness is quickly discovered when the Ranger is fighting against more maneuverable opponents with long range weapons. These ships can dictate the terms of the battle to the Ranger captain's frustration and detriment.



TFG-7141

Lancer Destroyer

The Lancer Destroyer, a smaller stablemate to the Ranger, and is an effective fusion design for an HCV. Its hangars, however, were

more limited, carrying only 4 Stinger fighters. This ship utilized a lighter version of the fusion beam, and with 4 extra power, could only overload two of its Light Fusion Beams when not shutting down power to its weapons or shields. As the fusion beams cool down after the attack, the Lancer funnels the extra power to its shields to regenerate them for the next close approach. It was cheap to build in relation to its firepower, and had nice maneuverability, which made it popular with fleet admirals. The Lancer did have a weaker offensive phaser armament, with only one Intermediate and two Light phasers, to go with the standard gatlings.

Hunter Frigate

This was the weakest of the early Fusion ships, carrying two Light Fusions and no Stinger fighters at all! With +5 extra power, this ship could overload both Light Fusions if necessary. Some aggressive Hunter crews, in desperate battles, opted to utilize the +4 power suicide overload option on their Light Fusion Beams. Occasionally, this ship assists the Hydran Police, although never using Police crews. Often, Hunters were seen patrolling the borders of the Hydran Kingdom after the Liberation. The Hydrans eventually replaced this ship with larger ones, due to its lack of durability.

Saracen Frigate Leader

Hunter Frigate Variant (Rare)

A highly potent variant of the basic Hunter added a nose light fusion beam, and upgraded the side phasers to the intermediate class. Compared to the standard version, the Saracen is a vast improvement. However, power is very tight aboard this vessel and to get the most out

of the fusions required most of the other weaponry to be shut down. Saracens were effective leaders for Hunter squadrons and were vicious fleet units. Unlike the similarly armed Lancer Destroyer, the Saracen could use speed and agility to bring its volatile weapons to bear.

CARRIERS and ESCORT Ships:

Cavalier Heavy Carrier

Ranger Cruiser Variant (Rare), Restricted Deployment (10%)

If it proved necessary for the Cavalier to enter into direct combat, this ship could rely on the additional bulkheads to help the ship withstand the fire of close range combat. A welcome sight to any Hydran fleet, the Cavalier heavy fleet carrier brought four full flights of Stinger fighters, usually carrying 3 flights of Stinger II fusion fighters and a single flight of the less uncommon Stinger H hellbore fighters. Its main role, however, lay in the unique ability of Hydran fighters to be rearmed by their carriers. Hydran carriers funnel their extra power (The Cavalier has +10!) to the fighters to rearm them. This allowed Stingers to rearm, repair, and strike again. The Cavalier can launch up to 16 fighters or shuttles at once from the three hangar bays. Pure carriers, up to capital ship size, generally used phaser armaments only, no Fusions or Hellbores. This lack of offensive weaponry led to the development of escort ships, specifically designed to protect the precious carriers.

Uhlan Carrier

Lancer Destroyer Variant (Uncommon)

A variant built from the Lancer hull, is a smaller pure carrier designed to hold two flights of Stinger II fusion fighters and a single flight of Stinger H hellbore fighters in the two hangars. The Uhlan, an HCV, has fewer bulkheads and less durability than the Cavalier, and it needs to be kept at a distance as much as possible from the main battle lines. One tactic the Uhlan can use to evade attacks (when defending Hydran gas giant home planets) is to elude pursuit by entering the atmosphere. The Uhlan has 8 extra power to rearm its fighters. This ship carried Stinger I fighters initially, transitioning to the later Stingers when they became available.

Scythian Escort Carrier

Hunter Frigate Variant (Uncommon)

While not the most potent ship in the Hydran arsenal, the Scythian is still rather impressive. Despite its size, two small hangers were crammed into the hull to allow the deployment of six Stinger fighters. The idea behind the Scythian was to extend the serviceable lifetime of the aging Hunter frigate. In a direct combat role, the Scythian failed as it retains none of the Hunter's fusions. However, the Scythian is a prized asset to small Hunter squadrons or in convoy escorts, where its flight of Stingers is much appreciated.

Escort/Aegis Hunter

Hunter Frigate Variant (Rare)

The Escort Hunter carries extra Gatling Defense Phasers in order to carry out its job of protecting

Hydran carriers. This was one of the first variants built for the escort role. This ship originally had 2 bulkhead boxes in the forward area, which were later replaced with an Aegis Sensor Pod refit, which provided the Aegis Hunter with bonus CCEW to attack enemy fighters attempting to get to whatever carrier the Aegis Hunter was protecting. The Gatling Defense Phasers are short ranged, like the Fusion Beam, but don't ignore them and let a Hydran escort next to you, as the Gatlings have the potential to put out quite a bit of damage up close. As with the base Hunter, this ship was eventually replaced later with slightly more durable ships, which could last a bit longer in combat.

FIGHTERS

Before we talk about the Stinger Fighters, let's look at the **Fighter Fusion Beam** Rules: Each separate Fighter Fusion Beam gun carries two "fusion energy charges", and when firing the beam out to a normal maximum range of 3 hexes, uses only a single fusion energy charge per firing. However, when a fusion armed fighter wants to fire at any range greater than 3 hexes, it must use up 2 fusion energy charges, which is often referred to as "double-shotting" the Fusion Beam. This increases the normal maximum range out to 10 hexes, but in return, reduces the damage by -1 point of damage per hex after range 3. Also, neither Fusion Beam gun can use the fusion energy charges of the other beam gun; The #1 beam cannot use the fusion energy charges of the #2 beam, and the #2 beam cannot use the fusion energy charges of the #1 beam. Now for the Stinger fighters:

Hydran Stinger fighters are one of the strengths of the Hydran fleets, as they possess the ability to fire both their lighter fighter guns and their heavier weapons on the same turn. The Hydrans deploy fighters more heavily than most regular Star Trek races do, in part because these Stingers carry around a lot of firepower for their size. The lack of any warp capability is the main drawback of fighters.

Stinger I Light Fighter

The earliest and weakest of these fighters is the Stinger I Light fighter, with only 7 damage boxes and 1 armor all around. Unfortunately for the enemies of the Hydrans, Stingers only get bigger after this! This fighter carries 1 Light Phaser beam, and not one, but two separate Fighter Fusion Beams, each with the ability to score up to a maximum of 12 points of damage at close range. A limitation of Stinger I fighters is that they have only 7 thrust.

Stinger II Medium Fighter

The Stinger II Medium fighter mounts the exact same fusion weapons as the Stinger I, but on a more durable framework of 9 damage boxes and 2/1/1/1 armor. The other major improvement is the mounting of 2 new, improved Stinger Phasers. These phasers have the damage potential of 2d5 each. This fighter also comes with an additional 2 thrust and +1 to its Offensive Bonus. This fighter quickly became a mainstay of Hydran fleets, as soon as enough were built to supplant the Stinger I Light fighter, and lasted for quite a while. The role of this fighter is very similar to one of the U.S.

Navy's fighters, the F/A-18 Hornet, because they are built to fill either the role of the assault fighter, or the superiority fighter, at will. This made them very renowned in their time, as they could switch from role to role at the behest of the fleet commander. That they also happened to be excellent in either role, as well, was icing on the cake for the Hydran Navy.

Stinger-H Torpedo Fighter

Stinger II Fighter Variant (Uncommon), Limited Availability (33%)

The Stinger-H is identical to the Stinger II in every way, except this variant carried a single Light Hellbore Torpedo in place of the Fighter Fusion Beams of the Stinger II. Whereas the job of the Stinger II was to get in "up close and personal", the Stinger H was a single shot longer ranged sniper that had to launch, fire, land and rearm, and start the cycle over again. This fighter was extra helpful to fusion ships fighting on the Lyran border, because the Hellbore torpedo damage weakened one of the Lyrans' main defensive weapons, the ESG, or Expanding Sphere Generator. The Light Hellbore Torpedo scores no collateral flash damage. This one-two punch of the close range Stinger II and the long range sniping of the Stinger H, proved to match up well together. Often this fighter would act in a defensive role to protect a carrier or fusion ship.

Stinger F Dogfight Fighter

Stinger II Fighter Variant (Common)

The third fighter, the Stinger F dogfight fighter, usually based on

planets, is a pure superiority fighter. Basically, this fighter carries only the two linked Stinger Phasers, but without those weapons, it winds up with a total of 11 Free Thrust! These fighters had one main job, which was to kill enemy fighters. A few Hydran ships, unable to carry or rearm regular Stingers, carried a few Stinger F fighters to protect themselves. Among regular Navy units, this fighter was seen as being defensive and weak without the heavier weapons of its siblings, making it relatively unpopular with the Navy personnel.

HELLBORE Ships:

Dragoon Cruiser

Ranger Cruiser Variant (Common), Limited Availability (33%)

As you can guess, the Hydran fleet admirals wanted the Dragoon class built as soon as they heard about the hellbore breakthrough, waiting impatiently at best. Once they finally came into service, and they found out how these hellbores reacted with the Lyran ESG's, Hydran admirals and captains were gleeful at this result. Initially, most of these hellbore classes were sent to the Lyran border, due to the effectiveness of the hellbore in knocking down Lyran ESG's, which then allowed fusion ships and Stingers to approach more closely. It proved to be adept at either long range fleet support or individual ship duels, but it was only able to hold 3 Stingers for its own support. As the numbers of this ship increased, some were gradually transferred to the Klingon sector and were highly successful there. Dragoons were also the first ships to need the use

of auxiliary reactors to assist in powering the hellbores. The arcs for the hellbores were split to either side to allow the Dragoon's hellbores to fire in support of ships over a wide area.

Knight Destroyer

Lancer Destroyer Variant (Common), Limited Availability (33%)

The Knight Destroyer quickly proved its worth in the fleet support role, and soon was so craved by fleet commanders, it was very seldom, if ever seen on lone patrols. Former fusion ship officers worried about the Knight's total lack of fighters, but over time, the Knight proved it could be just as effective without them. Smaller and more economic to build, the Knight added depth to fleets in a way the larger, more expensive Dragoons could not. The Knight's phaser armament is identical to the Lancer's, but the Knight should not be thrown into close combat needlessly, especially without supporting units nearby. Its main job is to take the shields of enemy ships down at range, not tangle with the opposing force.

Cuirassier Frigate

Hunter Frigate Variant (Common), Limited Availability (33%)

The Cuirassier Frigate has the same job of any other hellbore ship, which is firepower delivered at a standoff range. It shares the same lack of durability as the Hunter and the Escort/Aegis Hunter, but if kept at range, this is less of a problem. The Cuirassier is a good addition for a small fusion task force on the Lyran border. Just watch to make sure it doesn't wind up isolated from the rest of your ships, or you'll lose your frigate! Since the Cuirassier is

maneuverable, carries four light phasers, and a gatling with a 360 degree arc, this ship can be kept near any carriers you have in order to assist your escorts in protecting the carriers. It only lacks an Aegis Sensor Pod to be an escort!

A Few Hydran Tactical Notes

Using a combined arms Hydran fleet, place your Fusion ships in the lead, place any Stingers you have several hexes behind the Fusion ships, and put any Hellbore ships in the rear. This is the best way to take advantage of all the weapons in your fleet. Fusion ships generally have the most bulkheads, and should be able to close without taking too much damage on the run into range. Stingers (I,II) should never lead the Fusion ships, as their damage is insufficient to punch through by themselves. If they follow after the Fusion ships, they will generally take less damage, and will be attacking shields that have already absorbed damage. This approach lets more of your Stingers survive to get close enough to be able to use single shots instead of having to use doubleshots. Finally, Hellbore ships and the Stinger H fighter should be next behind your Stinger 2 's and support the Fusion ships with their Hellbore Torpedoes. Also, always resolve the fire of any of your enveloping mode Hellbores LAST! This takes advantage of any fusion, phaser, or Spear mode hellbore fire, which either weakens enemy shields, or can even knock them down, which enhances the effect of the enveloping mode. Hellbore ships and Stinger H's also help to weaken or remove ESG's

from Lyrans ships, so right before your Fusion ships get into range, fire those Hellbores!

Converting the Hydrans

Overview

The driving force behind the Hydran conversions has been Jeff Perkins. One of the toughest jobs for him has been to wait for Tyrel or myself to have some time to work on creating the SCSs and us changing his ideas from time to time to “fit” the existing Trek conversions. This has resulted in quite a few amusing back and forth debates on the Planetside Forums, but the end result has been worth the trouble. The past few weeks have been very productive and I applaud Jeff’s patience in waiting for the work to get done!

When looking at how to convert the Hydrans from Star Fleet Battles (SFB) over to Babylon 5 Wars, several large issues were quickly encountered. The earliest conversions, seen previously in Great Machine 11, were simply too over gunned for their contemporary Star Trek conversions. This problem was further compounded by the Hydran’s extensive use of fighters, which is not seen in the standard Star Trek background. The Stinger fighter was one of the most potent anti-ship fighters, for its points in Star Fleet Battles, and this nearly made it a game breaker in the Star Trek conversion. From these larger issues, additional problems developed over how to best create the effects seen in Star Fleet Battles in Babylon 5 Wars, such as with the

Hydran’s durable hull and enveloping hellbore torpedoes.

A Question of Scale

The first step involved scaling the Hydrans in such a way that they fit within the established Star Trek conversions, yet kept their unique abilities. The first solution was the cut back the number of weapons on the Hydran ships. While this was being pondered another solution presented itself. In his tweaking of his Star Trek conversion, Tyrel developed the basics for his “Neo” Star Trek conversions. This new conversion style improved the shielding and helped beef up the existing Trek ships, as well as giving the Trek ships some more flexibility with power and weapons. In this new version and Federation Constitution Cruiser was much more capable of holding its own against a Hydran Ranger Cruiser.

With this new “style” the basic armament of the Hydrans, as seen in the previous Great Machine could be maintained. It now became a question of how to create a balanced design, while keeping the unique Hydran flavor. A distinction was quickly made between the cruiser-sized vessels, such as the Ranger and Dragoon, versus the small Hunter and Lancer classes. The smaller ships utilized scaled down versions of the existing Fusion Beam (creating the Light Fusion Beam) and carried Light Phasers in a general 1 to 1 ratio with their Star Fleet Battles counterparts. The cruisers used the existing Fusion Beams and Hellbores as a template, while a general ratio of one Intermediate Phaser was used for every two Star Fleet Battles Phasers. The Gatling Phasers kept the 1 to 1 ratio and were reduced to a maximum of three shots.

Finding the Characteristics

In Star Fleet Battles, the Hydrans use “center hull” for all of their ships. The way the damage allocation system works, this makes Hydran ships incredibly tough to damage and to get weapon hits. The original thought was to boost the overall structure of the Hydran ships, but this quickly made them too large in comparison to the other Trek ships. After some brainstorming, with Jeff and Tyrel, I hit upon the idea to use Gaim bulkheads. While these bulkheads are not specifically Gaim bulkheads, they are functionally similar in the game. They allow the Hydrans to take damage and still protect their vital systems, mirroring rather effectively the Star Fleet Battles dynamic without creating extremely bulky structure blocks.

With the basic armament agreed upon as well as how to represent the Hydran’s sturdy ships, the question turned to the issue of the Stinger fighters. In the main Star Trek background, fighter usage is quite rare and those fighters that do exist are relatively weak. Meanwhile, the Hydrans are prolific fighter users in a background that is more fighter dependent than in the mainline Trek history and resulting Star Trek conversions. To get the right “feel”, the Stingers had to be dangerous while at the same time, not breaking the game against the fighter defense poor Star Trek conversions. The easiest changes were to shrink the size of the originally published Stingers and to remove most of their armor. These changes put the Stingers on par with many of the existing Star Trek conversion attack shuttle classes.

The Stinger-1 was not very

difficult as it used a single phaser beam weapon identical to several of the other Trek conversion units. The later Stingers, with their gatling phasers were more troublesome. The choice of two linked guns doing 2d5 damage was the winning proposal of half a dozen different choices. The various ideas were debated back and forth by all of us on the Planetside Forums and ranged from a Thunderbolt style gun to an exotic pulse weapon system. The final solution was chosen for simplicity and because it could generate decent damage to overcome the "Neo" Star Trek deflector shield damage reduction, yet at the same time not kill a ship every time it fired. While not quite the same monster it was in SFB, the Stinger Gatling can still hurt Trek ships and easily strip away shields.

The fighter fusion was the next concern. Much like the Stinger Gatling, we were looking for a way to create a dangerous weapon, while at the same time, staying balanced within the Star Trek conversions. The result is probably one of the better representations of an SFB weapon in B5W. I have always been a fan of the Descari's plasma bolters. I felt that the dynamic used by the plasma bolters might offer the solution we were looking for. Utilizing this dynamic, the fighter fusion is quite strong, for a Star Trek weapon, up close, but as in SFB rapidly loses damage if the Stinger wants to engage from range. Also, a price surcharge was included in the cost of all Stingers using fusions. This cost is for the ability to be able to be reloaded during a game as well as not having some of the disadvantages of missile weapons. For those players looking for a cheaper fighter and better handling, the Stinger-F Dogfight Fighter fits the

bill by only mounting a Stinger Gatling.

The Hellbore Torpedo

The last major hurdle was the Hellbore Torpedo. In SFB, the Hellbore is a vicious weapon able to inflict damage on weakened, non-facing shields. This resulted in creating the Enveloping damage mode for B5W. However, the dynamic did not translate well, initially to B5W. A single hellbore, doing average damage, would only do about 7 damage per shield projection. If this penetrated the shield projection, most of the Neo Star Trek deflector shields would block 2-3 additional damage. This would leave about 4 points of damage, which even the lightly armored Trek ships can resist.

One option was the simply increase the damage. This generated the intended result, but would more than likely crush the target ship, rendering the weapon unbalanced. Demiurge suggested a "scaling" damage amount that would increase with the size of the ship. Again, it created a weapon that was capable, but not entirely realistic. Demiurge and Jeff also came up with giving the hellbore plasma damage, since the hellbore is a mini fusion reaction, and since the hellbore is capable of seeking out and damaging the weakest shield, it was felt that it could ignore the deflector shield damage absorption. Also, by dividing the damage by the number of projections plus one, the proper amount of damage could be applied to every shield with the weakest shield taking double. Finally, from the original hellbore rules in the previous Great Machine all hellbores from a single ship add up their damage, after rolling to hit, and act as a single hellbore volley.

Individually, a hellbore is still not extremely effective. However, several from one ship allow the weapon to become a powerful, support weapon in the Hydran arsenal. Unfortunately, the rules for the hellbore are a little more complex than most weapons in B5W. This was seen as a necessary evil to create a more balanced weapon that mimicked the effects seen in SFB.

Enjoy!

We hope that we have made a faithful conversion of the Hydrans to B5Wars. There is still plenty of play testing to be done to get the best results and any critiques or comments are always welcome! We would all like to thank Tyrel for his Trek conversions (both types!) and his input. Also, Demiurge has been a great help recently in providing a fresh insight to the conversion and providing several key solutions.

Legal Note: The Hydrans are an original production for Star Fleet Battles by the Amarillo Design Bureau, Inc.

* * *

A Glimpse of the Future

The Nexus Universe - Part 4

By Geoffrey and Jeremy Stano

Introduction

This issue of contains several variants for the three Nexus races presented so far. The Sal-bez, particularly during the Craytan War were looking for any way to gain the advantage over the Craytan. This forced the Sal-bez leadership to explore nearly any option. This resulted in combat versions of civilian ships, such as the Zef'jem Heavy Frigate, or using any system available to them in their cruisers, such as the Kre'tck carrier and Ash-ver shock cruiser.

Meanwhile, the Craytan knew they had the advantage in training, but slowly began to realize they lacked the numbers the Sal-bez could draw upon. The major weakness in the Craytan fleet was in the range of its weapons, primarily plasma guns and cannons. While plasma bombs were developed, very few of these systems could be deployed. Looking for a solution, the Craytan started retrofitting old, but long-ranged technology. The new designs sacrificed rate of fire and firing arcs for the ability to equal the range of their opponents. The assault cannon series of weapons are a take-off on the bil-pro weapons first designed by Ben Rubery. The Topren Patrol Destroyer is a sneak peak into the later Craytan forces, who found a balance

between old and new technology to create the most effective fleet for the Union.

Finally, the ever unusual Polarens have been given several support units, such as the Grantir and OSATs. The OSATs, in particular, demonstrate the Polaren's early view that LCVs and MCVs were the only opponents they would face. Even with a vast numerical superiority, their weapons were a poor match for the large Sal-bez cruiser forces during the Polaren Conflict. Out of that conflict the Polarens developed their combined ships to even the odds and the earliest example of this is in the Norevet Heavy Frigate. Aside from the Kyrat and Norevet, no other combined ship fought during the war with the Sal-bez. However, the designs presented here showcase what the Polarens were doing after the Polaren Conflict and leading to the First War of Control. The Promarlen Cruiser is the latest ship published to date, but is an example of what the Polarens were capable of with their combined ship doctrine. This issue also includes updated SCSs for the combined ships presented in Great Machine 15. Several errors were found and have been corrected. These changes were to the Gratherin Destroyer, Poly Jump Destroyer, and the Remava Medium Cruiser.

My brother and I have been working to finish the

backgrounds to these three races and detail the Craytan War and Polaren Conflict. As we work on this, we hope that you enjoy using the Nexus ships. Comments and critiques are always welcome and feel free to drop us an e-mail at kosnett@hotmail.com.

Sal-bez Coalition Forces

Kre'tck Carrier

In Service: 2103

Fel-riz New Patrol Cruiser Variant (Uncommon)

As the Sal-bez noted the success their Urz'chk fighters were having against the Craytan, they began to look for other ways to bring fighters to the battle. Despite the original Patrol Cruiser's vast internal volume, there was no place else to put in additional fighters, aside from the six in the New Patrol Cruiser. As the battles with the Craytan dragged on, the Sal-bez had several New Patrol Cruisers awaiting replacement heavy laser cutters. Almost on a whim, the Center for Military Space Command decided to add a small hanger in the nose and get the hull back into service, as opposed to wait for the replacement systems. The result was a surprisingly effective ship for its time. The early swarm torpedoes allowed the Carrier to stay at longer ranges, and its ability to carry 12 fighters was definitely appreciated. Military planners liked the ship so much, that several other damaged Fel-riz New Patrol Cruisers were converted to this design.

Ash-ver Shock Cruiser

In Service: 2098

Fel-riz New Patrol Cruiser Variant (Uncommon)

The Shock Cruiser was born out of military and economic concerns from before and during the Craytan War. Originally, military planners saw this ship as a short-ranged hunter-killer, able to devastate enemy ships within Sal-bez ranks or to take out enemy command ships. In practice, the ship was powerful but simply did not have the best armament and often could not kill the larger Craytan cruisers or effectively target their smaller escorts. Although the design proved wanting in the opening stages of the Craytan War, quite a few were still produced. Due to the surprise of the conflict, the Sal-bez were unable to produce enough heavy laser cutters at the start. Instead of leaving ships sitting, which were otherwise able to fight, the surplus of heavy plasma guns were utilized to produce more Ash-vers. In

numbers the Ash-ver class showed more promise and limited production continued into the Polaren Conflict. However, by this time the small Polaren LCVs dodged the more cumbersome Shock Cruisers. Production ended after the conflict, but several ships of this class did serve into the First War of Control.

Union of Craytan States Forces

Avitun Guncruiser

In Service: 2099

Epiron Cruiser Variant (Uncommon)

The arrival of the Sal-bez in 2080 created an enormous amount of worry within the military leadership of the Craytan. The early skirmishes indicated that the Sal-bez were less well trained than their Craytan counterparts, but made up for this with much longer-ranged guns. The primary Sal-bez weapons, such as laser cutters and the early swarm torpedo, were not the most damaging weapons. However, their range allowed the Sal-bez the option to strike first. If the Craytan were to defend their world, they needed a way to counter this advantage. Stellar Command initiated crash programs into several forms of weapons research, but none could be produced quickly, or provide sufficient firepower. One bright engineer hit upon an unusual idea after spending time servicing several Deprin orbital defense satellites, which utilized old binary liquid propellant weapons with very good range. The Craytan leadership was intrigued and engineers poured over options to retrofit Craytan ships with this type of weaponry. Many enhancements were made to the old technology to modernize the weapon as much as possible, resulting in the light assault cannon and the assault cannon.

The first tests were performed on a smaller corvette, but the results proved lacking as the hull could only mount the light assault cannon. The decision was made to convert several, under construction Epirons, to an assault cannon armament. The changes were extensive, resulting in a completely remade nose section as well as removing the side cargo bays and plasma mounts. This limited the new Avitun Guncruiser to new production or conversion of heavily damaged ships. Despite this, the Avitun mounted four of the long-ranged assault cannons. In combat trials, the Avitun did indeed have unsurpassed range, but suffered from several liabilities. First, the nature of the weapon required large mounts and turrets that had to physically move to track

their targets. This limited the arcs of the guns significantly. In addition, despite the modernization, this particular type of weapon was extremely slow to arm and required large amounts of power to move and stabilize the gun. This forced Stellar Command to rely upon the more tried and true Epiron and Epiron Refits when the war with the Sal-bez began. The Avitun still played a major role supporting the Epirons. Individual Avituns would selectively engage key Sal-bez units at range, which they did to great effect in the opening stages of the war. Overall, the Avitun would remain a strong support unit for many years within the Craytan Fleet.

Ranged Corvette

In Service: 2095

Corvette Variant (Uncommon)

The initial concept of mounting heavy binary liquid propellant weapons on Craytan ships was done on an existing Corvette hull. With the first successful retrofit, the Craytan realized that the new Ranged Corvette lacked the usefulness of its plasma armed cousin. The light assault cannons, while matching the range of the best Sal-bez weapons, were pitifully slow to arm and were less damaging as well. While not considered a success for the Corvette, the concept met better reviews in the larger Avitun Guncruisers. During the war with the Sal-bez, the Craytan did build substantial numbers of Ranged Corvettes. In battle, several Ranged Corvettes would work together to attack a target at range, in order to weaken it to allow standard Corvettes to exploit the attack. This tactic was seen often against the Ash'ver Shock Cruisers of the Sal-bez, whose plasma armament could be lethal to the small Craytan Corvettes.

Topren Patrol Destroyer

In Service: 2135

Base Hull (Common)

The Topren Patrol Destroyer represents the rapidly changing needs and abilities of the Craytan Stellar Command. The Topren also showcases the changing doctrine of Craytan naval forces. First deployed in 2135, the Topren served as the consort to

the newly designed light cruiser and the aging Epiron Refit cruisers. However, the destroyer was the first new generation Craytan ship to rely primarily upon the new particle bolt for defense, although a single triple chatter cannon remained.

By the mid 2120s, the Craytan Union had been rapidly expanding into several new systems, such as Caliton and Breyman. This expansion was threatened by the inability of the Union to deploy a relatively long-ranged, yet cheap unit. This led to the deliberate design of the Topren, which shares the low cost of the smaller Corvette, yet boasts the cruiser range of the Epiron and new light cruiser. Furthermore, the design incorporated the best new technologies available to the Union. After the war with the Sal-bez, the Craytan appreciated the flexibility of the assault cannon, despite its slow rate of fire. Considering that the Topren would work in groups, a single assault cannon was installed to provide the squadron with substantial ranged firepower. This was supported by two heavy plasma cannons. To assist in its long patrols, the new particle bolt was used for defense, to minimize the strain on the magazine. As the First War of Control began, the Topren found itself well equipped to face any number of foes and would become a very successful class.

Polaren Syndicate Forces

Grantir Fast Transport

In Service: 1809

Base Hull (Unlimited)

One of the earliest cargo haulers in Polaren service were the Grantir Fast Transports. These small vessels were extremely fast and could deliver priority cargo with some self-defense capabilities. After first contact, these transports were capable of running blockades and outrunning raiders. The old Talynev Corvettes were originally based off of the first Grantir designs. By the late 2090s through early 2110s, most Grantirs were converted from any number of unused Talynev or retired LCVs. However, by 2137, the Polarens began using elements from their more advanced LCVs in new Grantir construction to improve the durability and

speed of the design. Grantirs are generally considered one of the oldest, still operating, designs among all of the Nexus races.

Norevet Heavy Frigate

Base Hull (Unlimited Deployment)

The Norevet was conceived in the closing days of the war with the Sal-bez. The Polarens were quickly learning that their existing fleet of LCVs, Kyrat frigates, and massive colony jump cruisers simply could not stand up to the heavier units deployed by the Sal-bez. Exploration and contact with other races further emphasized the size disparity between the Polarens and the other races. This gave rise to the Polaren combined ships. The Norevet was designed to place a small central connector between two LCVs resulting in a ship slightly larger than a Kyrat frigate. This connector, while slightly hampering the ship's maneuvering abilities and initiative, added a better sensor array and a medium weapon mount. Typically, Polaren opponents classified the heavy frigate "class" (and all other classes for that matter) by the type of weapon in the connector mount, which for the Norevet was a medium blast cannon. Later variants carried kinetic cannons and kinetic accelerators. Norevets and their cousins eventually replaced the Kyrats in the fleet role, but worked closely with the ever present LCVs in the fleet to protect the larger cruisers.

Overall, the Norevet is an unusual design as it has many features in common with medium vessels as well as heavy combat vessels, but is considered a medium ship for targeting and maneuvering purposes. Norevets, and any heavy frigate "class" for that matter, were effective combat units, but were highly susceptible to combat damage. Refits attempted to address some issues, such as adding armor, but the design as a whole remained fragile. Despite these issues, Norevets and their later kin, were easy to produce and served in large numbers in the Polaren fleet. While casualties to these ships could be high, they often gave as good as they

Hartolen Freighter

In Service: 1823

Base Hull (Unlimited)

The Polaren space forces were dominated by LCV units from nearly the beginning of space flight to well into the First War of Control. There was no exception when it came to hauling large amounts of freight. The Hartolen freighter utilizes a single LCV to act almost like a tug by docking to a massive cargo sled. Directly below the docking point was a small cargo bay for sensitive cargoes, such as personnel, food, and other such items. This small bay was well reinforced. The aft section of the sled had two huge cargo bays and a small hanger deck for two cargo shuttles. These cargo bays were used for bulk or liquid cargo that did not require exacting atmospheric conditions.

One amazing feature of the Hartolen was that the cargo sled was designed as a flying wing and capable of ducting thrust generated by the docked LCV. This allowed the freighter to land on atmospheric planets. Normally, this was avoided unless time was of the essence. The typical routine was to undock the towing LCV and dock it to a previously filled sled. The newly arrived sled would then be unloaded at the Polarens' leisure and prepped for the next run. Overall, Hartolen freighters were extremely ponderous, due to the small LCVs piloting them. However, since the cargo sled was little more than well constructed cargo bays, the Polarens could afford to heavily armor the sled against damage and collisions.

Oranet Medium Jump Cruiser

Base Hull (Rare Remava Medium Cruiser Variant)

The Oranet is a jump capable version of the various medium cruisers in Polaren service. Unlike the Polyr jump destroyer, the Oranet retains some of its additional firepower due to the larger size of its central connector. Still, the sacrifice in firepower is significant as each heavy weapon was downgraded to a medium



Oranet saw only a brief tenure as a frontline Polaren unit. With the introduction of the heavy cruiser class towards the end of the First War of Control, its function was redundant. Every heavy cruiser was equipped with a jump drive and boasted more firepower than the mainline Remava medium cruiser. The Oranet was also too large to be used effectively in smaller squadrons, where a Polyr served just as well. In the end, the jump cruiser was relegated to forming the core of fast reaction squadrons, acting as a fleet reserve unit. The Oranet also saw continued use as an anti-raider platform and several were converted into makeshift exploration vessels.

Promarlen Heavy Cruiser

Base Hull (Unlimited Deployment)

Developed in the closing years of the First War of Control, the Promarlen heavy cruiser provided the Polarens a ship that could go toe to toe with opposing enemy cruisers. It was still smaller than the newest enemy battlecruisers and dreadnoughts, but it was a low maintenance, versatile design. The Promarlen, the earliest of the heavy cruiser types, mounted four heavy blast canons and boasted a staggering amount of firepower at close ranges when all of the weapons of its connected LCVs could be used effectively. Complete with a jump drive, good sensors, and a varied weapons package, Promarlens and their future designs would lead the Polaren fleet well into the Second War of Control. The only true weakness of the design was its docking collars, like any of the other combined ships.

Mythirim OSAT

In Service: 1818

Base Hull (Common)

The Mythirim class OSAT has served in the Polaren space forces for over 300 years. The original design protected Polaren assets on both sides of the conflict between the homeworld and the colony of Garantith. In its intended purpose, the Mythirim is a deadly opponent. As the Polarens only utilized LCVs, the Mythirim is constructed to deal killing blows to LCVs, with large bursts of damaging matter rounds, capable of engaging any opponent outside of the LCV's effective range. This is accomplished by the heavy fletchlette gun mounted aboard the OSAT and flanked by two medium versions. To round out defense, a trio of point defense lasers protected the Mythirim from attacking LCVs. The heavy gun was never mounted to any Polaren ships as it utilized excessive amounts of

ammunition and required frequent resupply. By the time the Polarens had combat ships capable of mounting the system, it had been surpassed by more efficient and versatile systems.

In the war with the Sal-bez, the Mythirim proved disastrously inefficient. With its main armament geared towards MCV and LCV class vessels, the large Sal-bez cruisers and small Urz'chk fighters were surprisingly safe from Mythirim attacks. Although Mythirims could cause incredible damage if they hit, they required expensive sensor mine packages to aid in their targeting. By the end of the conflict, and after 300 years of service, the Mythirim was finally forced to retire.

Namaran OSAT

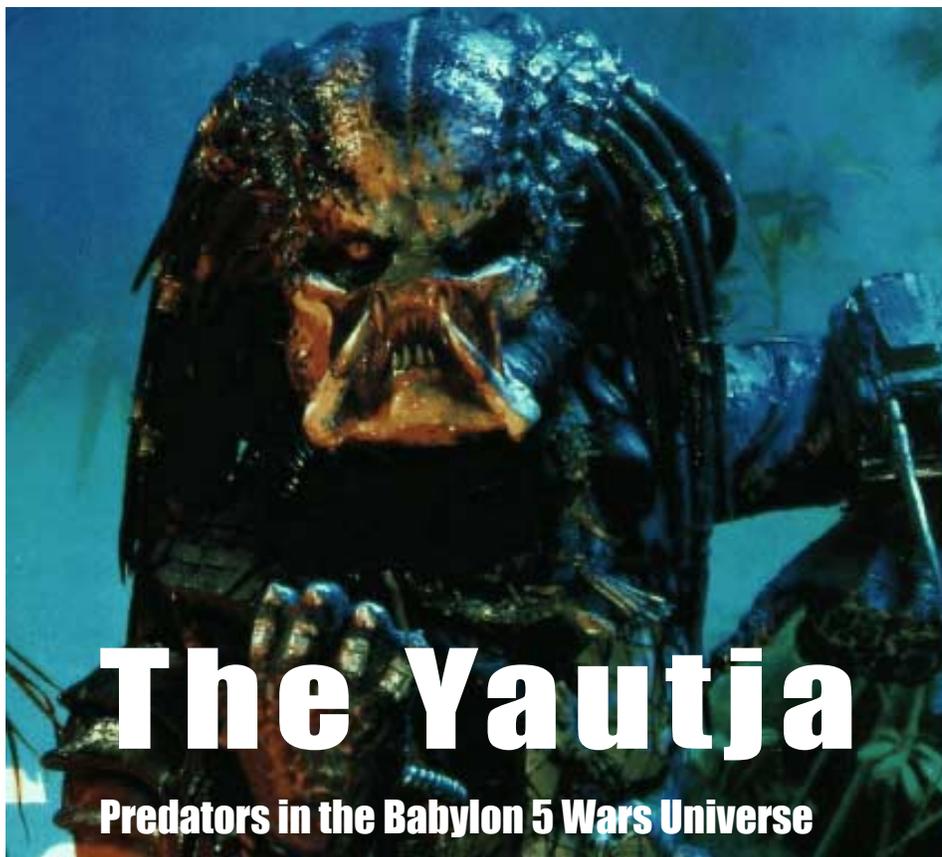
In Service: 2121

Base Hull (Common), Limited Deployment (33%)

In response to the ineffectiveness of their Mythirim OSATs, the Polarens quickly built and deployed the Namaran OSAT. The Namaran uses the base frame, reactor, and sensors of the Mythirim, but is not considered a variant. The Polarens opted to create an anti-ship unit and elected to rely upon their LCV swarms to protect Namarans from Sal-bez fighter strikes. The main weapon was centered upon a greatly modified heavy fletchlette gun. Instead of utilizing ammunition that fragmented shortly before impact, the ammunition remained a single solid piece to provide maximum damage potential. New tracking equipment gave the gun enhanced fire control against cruisers, at the expense of smaller vessels. The result was a weapon very similar to a standard heavy railgun.

Considering the haste involved in the construction, the Namaran OSAT was surprisingly effective in its intended role, and proved to be the bane of Sal-bez cruisers throughout the Blood Star Campaign. However, this was simply a stop-gap measure and the OSAT was retired within several years of the conflict, resulting in its limited deployment. During its brief existence, the Polarens learned quite a bit, and the lessons learned would be applied to the development of blast cannons by the time of the First War of Control.

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The Hunt is On... and You are the Prey

By Christian Meador

Introduction

*Until the lions have their historians,
tales of the hunt shall always glorify
the hunter.*

- African Proverb

The Yautja. The name is formless, without shape or meaning, of the void. As such, it is the perfect name for them. Throughout the centuries, they have come as they have willed, moving amongst us silent as death. They are but shadows, and less than shadows. They have molded our societies, adopted the guise of the Gods, and stalked the jungles as

demons. They have brought forth mythology and civilization. And in blinding flashes of incandescent nuclear fire, they have taken it away. They cull our best and brightest, but show sympathy and a thing not unlike mercy to the weak. They see mankind as but sport, our achievements and aspirations as ephemeral and meaningless. And in the greater sense of the endless galaxy, perhaps it is even true. To them, we are merely prey.

And they are the Predators.

This article will examine introducing the Predators into your B5 Wars playing field. While not a complete race to be used in campaign play, the Yautja make a fascinating and formidable addition to any exploration campaign, and will likely bring out trepidation in you players

reserved for the like of the Borg. The Yautja are the ultimate Predators, the most fearsome of bogeymen, but maybe, just maybe, you can earn their respect. And if you do, who knows where they might show up later in the game? Only your gamemaster knows for sure!

Background

The Yautja have been a space faring race for centuries, visiting Earth in ancient times during the first rise of humanity. Their culture is an expression of the hunt. For a Yautja warrior, all status, all rights, and all chances of mating depend on the success of their hunts. To this end they have focused their intellect and amazing longevity, developing ever better tools to serve them in their safaris. Cloaking technology, multiple sensory inputs, a vast array of specialized weapons, healing kits, even personal nuclear devices ensure that the already formidable warriors have every possible edge when dealing with their prey.

Yet honor still calls to the Predators. They hunt other warriors as expressions of their dominance and superiority. The weak, infirm, woman and children have little to fear from these demons of the night. Only those who bear weapons, who battle on the behalf of their respective societies, need face their skills. And while their starships can carry hundreds of warriors across the galaxy, each Predator hunt is a lone one. If the Predator who is hunting you can be defeated, you gain the respect of the other hunters. Only the greatest prey, the like of the dreaded xenomorph Aliens, can gain the attention of a pack of Yautja.

Of course, in their galaxy, there are relatively few space faring races.

The Yautja are unchallenged in the depths of space. Combat amongst the stars against worthy foes is unknown to them. The greatest of their ancient enemies, known to human kind as the Space Jockeys, passed from the Milky Way long ago. Indeed, the only one a human ever saw was the victim of a xenomorph infestation, encountered by Ripley's Nostromo on LV-426. The days of battle between those huge and telepathic space tyrants and the hunters of the Yautja are but memories in the solar wind.

The expansion of the hunt into space would no doubt be of great interest to the Yautja as a civilization. While initially applying the same rules to the game that they do in their interaction with lesser species during their stalking on the different worlds of the galaxy, it is unknown how they would react to a true challenge of their abilities that could threaten them at a species level. Nomadic,

the Yautja homeworld has yet to be determined. Most who have studied them believe their race exists among the stars, clans of Predators separated by time and space from their common culture, existing to visit and overcome the myriad worlds of their spiral galaxy. But there is little doubt what their motivation would be once they encountered war vessels of a space capable culture. They would be true to their nature. They would hunt.

And if that means they would stalk the ships of your B5 space exploration campaign, so much the better.

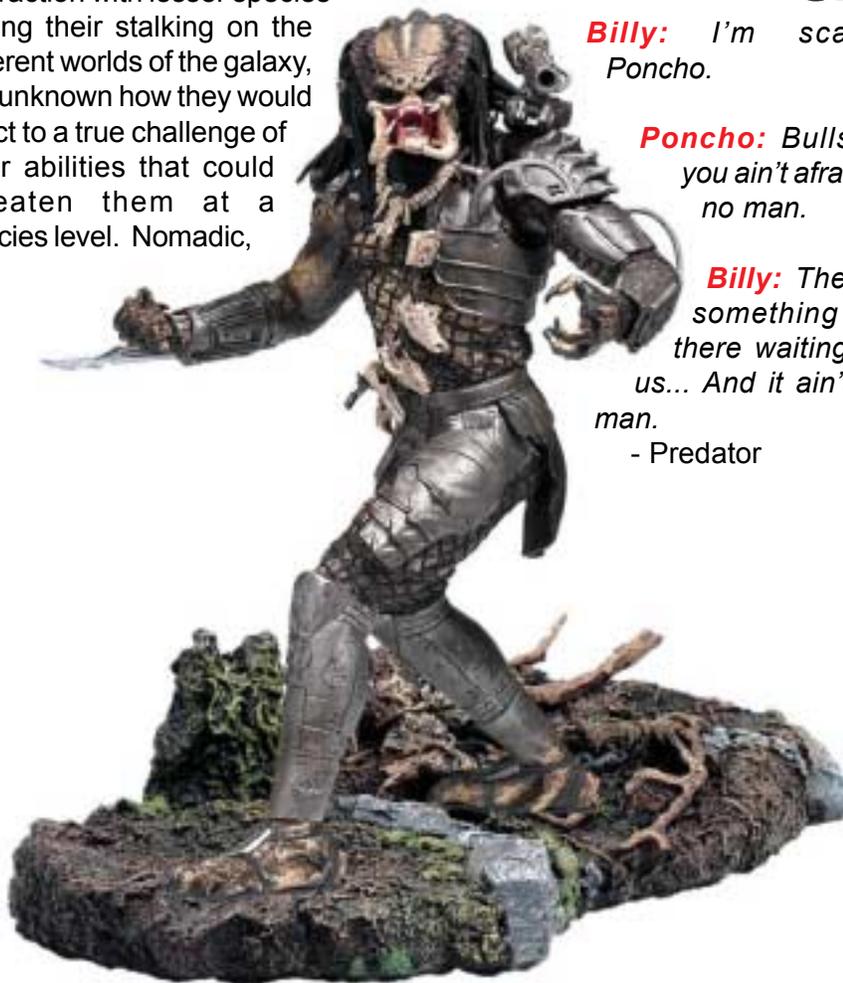
Technology

Billy: *I'm scared Poncho.*

Poncho: *Bullshit, you ain't afraid of no man.*

Billy: *There's something out there waiting for us... And it ain't no man.*

- Predator



Yautja technology is quite advanced, and has remained at that level for tens of thousands of years. However, it is also extremely focused, and many of the cultural advancements that we would take for granted have been deemed unworthy of the attention of any true Yautja. Their interest in technology is subsidiary to their psychosis, and it is focused entirely on their aggregate cultural mania.

That being said, encountering a Yautja starship should be a chilling experience for the races that have fared into the void only relatively recently. The Predator's starships are just as formidable as one would expect for a society that exists between the stars.

Cloaking Device

While individual Yautja hunters are provided with their invisibility cloaks, bending light around them, the Yautja quickly learned that the technology wasn't quite so easy to adapt to thousand meter long starships. As such, only their most important vessels, the floating cities and homes to entire clans known as Motherships, are consistently fitted with the cloaking device. Lesser vessels must make due with Stealth coatings and Sensor Ghost projectors, as discussed below.

Cloaking Devices on Yautja Motherships have a rating of one third of the vessels EW rating, which for these vessels defaults to four. This is a strong cloak, able to bend seeking sensors away from the hull and allows for the Motherships to penetrate into even the most well-guarded of planetary systems. Part of the cloaking system includes heat and noise baffles, that make the vessels unnervingly quiet even when

in atmospheric conditions. A Mothership could be hovering just a few meters away and be completely unnoticed by the average humanoid. This adds to their fearsome reputation and sense of the macabre.

All cloaking device rules follow the guidelines indicated in Tyrel Lohr's Star Trek Rules PDF, v2.5. This can be found at planetside.firenebula.com.

Stealth Technology

The majority of Yautja ships use Stealth, making it extremely difficult to detect or lock-on to the unit in question. This operates identically to the Hyach Stealth rules located in Militaries of the League II, page 5. For those without that supplement a summary follows:

The ships are by default undetected and do not appear on the map, using secret movement orders. They are only detected on the map when they get within the following number of hexes of a unit:

Base, 5xSensor Rating

ELINT ship, 3xSensor Rating

Normal Ship, 2xSensor Rating

Fighter, Offensive Bonus

After revealed, they still can only be locked on to if the unit is within the following ranges:

Base, 24 hexes

Ship, 12 hexes

Fighters or Shuttles, 4 hexes

If the stealth ship locks on to an enemy vessel or fires weapons at them, it is considered revealed,

however the difficulty to lock on it still applies.

Stealth ships are detected after EW has been allocated, so in most cases they can gain a single round of unreturned fire.

Sensor Ghost Caster

Another refinement of the Yautja electronic countermeasure facility, the Sensor Ghost caster plays havoc with enemy missile guidance. Creating false images, it creates a daunting problem for both human and computer ballistic guidance. While turning the caster on voids Stealth capability in Yautja ships, doing so gives the vessel a +6 DEW bonus against ballistic weapons only.

Reflective Armor

A high-tech defense, Yautja vessels are coated with a reflective substance that bends coherent light away up impact, making laser classed weapons much less effective against them. This has had the side affect of making laser weapons obsolescent among the clans, whose primary foe in space is likely to be another Yautja clan quarreling over prime hunting grounds.

Yautja ships gain an armor bonus equal to their reflective armor rating against laser class weapons (including Pulse lasers from other crossover genres). In addition, the reflective armor rating does protect against subsequent rakes against the same structural location for raking weapons, though the base armor rating is ignored as usual.

Plasma Lance

A focused plasma weapon, as seen in the orbital drilling scene in Aliens versus Predator movie. These weapons are extremely efficient at causing primary core damage due to its plasma abilities, often coring out ships to drift while leaving their hulls intact. This facilitates a furtherance of the hunt on the victim ship.

Disk Defense System

Utilizing a larger version of the Predator's killing disk, these ship based weapons are a nightmare to enemy fighter pilots. Utilized in the same manner as a Narn Pulsar Mine, the detection of approaching fighters sends out these shuriken disks encased in an ambient energy field and decimates them. The weapon does a standard eight points of matter damage, designed intentionally to disable most fighters without destroying them. Sufficiently spirited captives are often found from the fighter pilots of other races, and they make for great sport.

Spear Launchers

A catapult like device used with the Yautja's Boarding Spear fighters, this allows them to be fired off at considerable velocity in the directions indicated on the SCS. Spears launched in this manner don't suffer the usual initiative penalties associated with launched fighters or shuttles, and can be given a speed of five in any direction it is capable of being fired. This allows the Boarding Spears to have great latitude and capability in boarding an enemy vessel.

Starships

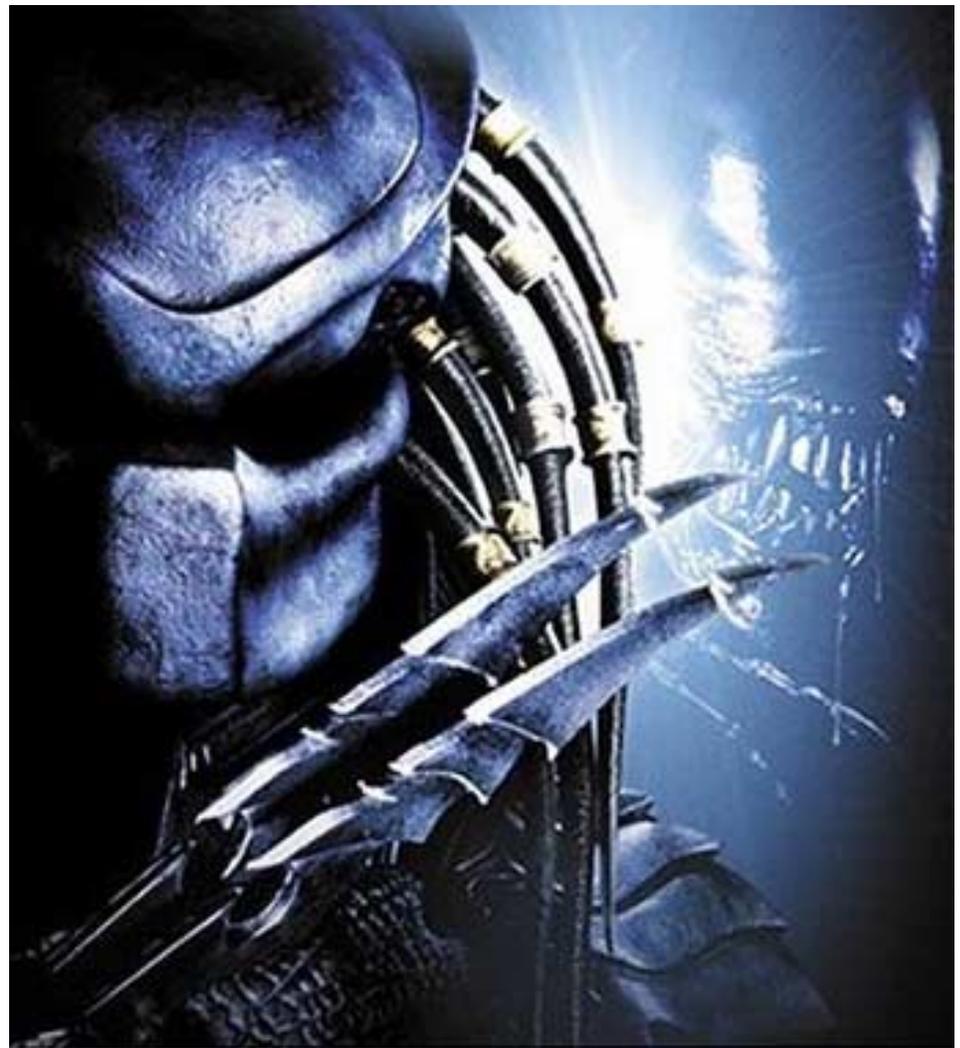
"You don't know them, don't know what they're like. You've heard the stories, but deep down you don't believe them, you still think you're the toughest thing going... That's not how it is. When it comes right down to it, it's going to be you against walking death - just you. And when it gets to that point, all the fancy knicknacks in the world won't mean shit, and how tough you think you are won't matter. What matters is whether you're ready to do anything to take 'em down."

- Predator, Cold War

Mothership

The great ark that carries entire Yautja clans from world to world, it is in search of ever more worthy prey. The Yautja Mothership protects its clan well, from its invisibility to its sturdy armor, and its deadly plasma and pulse weapon systems. The Mothership makes the hunt possible, and for that it carries a special place in the heart of its clan.

Like the Predators themselves, few things can oppose a Mothership when its prey has been chosen. In addition to its intimidating weapon suite, the Mothership acts as a carrier to deploy the tools of the hunt. Boarding Spears, which can be used as fast but ungainly fighters, or breach the hulls of enemy ships to deploy Predators in their midst, or as was seen in AvP even fire them down into the landmasses of unknown worlds. Ner'uda shuttles, to send out small hunting parties to reap the trophies that are required by Yautja society. Egg-laying drones, that plant the eggs of the xenomorphs in far off locations to later be culled. Even docking



facilities for smaller ships, such as the Safari Cruiser or Tracking Cutter. The Mothership lives up to its name, acting as a base and haven for the entire Yautja society.

Safari Cruiser

A sleek vessel, the Safari cruiser often is used to take the veteran Yautja warriors on their most difficult hunts. Approaching obliquely to the world of its choice, it launches a Ner'uda shuttle to the hunting grounds, as seen in the opening sequence in Predator. The Safari cruiser is unused to space combat, but makes for a potent adversary, often gaining the advantage in the opening salvo with its stealth

capabilities and suite of pulse tracking weapons.

Tracking Cutter

The smallest of the mainline Predator starships, the Tracking Cutter is often used when inserting hunting parties into urban locations. Once present in a city, it uses its heavy plasma cannon to silently cut its way underneath its hunting grounds. Often potential prey only find that a star vessel is in their midst after defeating the Yautja warrior in question, as shown when Detective Mike Harrigan tracked a young Predator back to his Cutter hidden underneath a tenement in Los Angeles.

Boarding Spear

Intended primarily in its role to allow Predators to board opposing space vessels, the Boarding Spear can also function with some capability as a heavy interceptor should the need call for it. However, it is far more deadly when injecting a Yautja warrior into the heart of an enemy vessel, to hunt in the close confines of the ship. The Boarding Spear uses the same boarding rules as a normal breaching pod.

Ner'uda Shuttle and Egg Laying Drone

Included for completeness, each of these vessels function as normal shuttles. The Egg-Laying Drone is an automated shuttle containing xenomorph eggs, which they use to seed worlds for later hunting. Introducing alien xenomorphs onto a player's world is left as an exercise in pure evil by the campaign GM.

Predators

Note that Predator boarding parties add +2/-2 to all boarding actions, and can cloak themselves after boarding if they desire. While cloaked they cannot attack or be attacked, but gain an additional +1 bonus (up to +3) when they decloak to attack in future rounds.

If the campaign in question includes Elite characters, it is quite likely that the Yautja will seek out the more capable individuals on any world they arrive on. With their advanced cloaking technologies, Predators may be able to stalk worlds unseen and undetected even when facing advanced sensor technologies.

A hunt normally takes 1d3 turns to resolve. Roll on the table below to determine the outcome. Add +1 if the officer in question is an expert scanner, security officer or war leader, add +2 if they are an expert warrior or troop leader.

2 or less: the Predator slays the elite officer in the hunt, taking his spine and skull for a gruesome trophy.

3-4: the elite officer is killed by the Predator, but the Predator is wounded. The Yautja's honor has been met, and they have some little respect for their new prey.

5-7: the elite officer fights the Predator to a draw, both of them being wounded. The elite officer is out of action for 1d3 turns, the Predator escapes to hunt another day. He will return 1d20 turns later to settle which of them is predator, and which of them is prey.

8-9: the elite officer defeats the Predator, who activates his nuclear device. The officer manages to escape the blast, but one structure

on the planet is destroyed. The Yautja as a race acknowledge the officer's victory, and may act in their favor in future encounters.

10 plus: the elite officer defeats the Predator, and disarms him before his death blast. The Predator in question may be ransomed, rescued, or find some other way to kill himself to settle his honor. The Yautja race becomes friendly with the elite officer, and will act to his advantage 1d4 times in the future. However, as always with the enigmatic Yautja, how that is expressed is up to their own unique sense of honor, and may be covert in nature.

Conclusion

Monsters, such as this one, are rare. They exist to keep us humble, to remind us that we are not the greatest creatures in the universe. They also exist to remind us of the relationship between predator and prey.

Without prey, the predator is nothing.

- Predator, Big Game

I hope you've enjoyed this look into the mind and capabilities of the Yautja, as well as the ships they utilize in the hunt. Adding the Predators into a normal exploration campaign, or even just as a surprise addition to a table top game, can make for a game session that the players in question won't likely forget!

Until next time...

* * *



BABYLON 5 WARS SCENARIO *by Keith Carpenter*



Unresolved Issues

Starfleet vs. The Old Republic

The universe is filled with unanswered questions:

What is the meaning of life?

Which is correct, zip then fasten or fasten then zip?

Why does every race have its own version of Swedish Meatballs?

Which is the better ship, the Defiant or the White Star?

Which is better, Star Wars or Star Trek? – Time to find out.

“Captains Log, stardate 56875.8. We are en-route to the science outpost at Sigma Antares V, or at least, where it was. Starfleet has detected unusual spatial disturbances in the region, which could indicate Wormhole or Transwarp conduit activity. It could be the Dominion, or it could be the Borg. Whoever it is, all we know for certain is that the base is gone. Starfleet has dispatched our taskforce to investigate.”

“Well R4, we’re going to Nakarra to investigate allegations that the commonwealth is building a new, advanced war fleet.”

“What was that? No, we don’t know what that spatial disturbance was. But none of the vessels have found any damage, so we’re continuing.”

“Hmm? No, if we find evidence of it then we’ll go straight into the offensive. We don’t know the capabilities of the new ships, so we can’t take the chance. And no, I don’t like it any more than you R4, but this is a war.”

Starfleet Forces

1x Sovereign Dreadnought (2200 points)

with 4x Danube Runabouts including
10x Micro Torpedoes (980 points)
and 6x Type 11 Heavy Shuttles (324 points)

1x Akira Strike Cruiser (850 points)

with 18x Peregrine Fighters including
4x Micro Torpedoes (1836 points)
and 4x Type 9 Shuttles (168 points)

1x Prometheus Attack Frigate (1100 points)

with 4x Type 9 Shuttles (168 points)

2x Defiant Heavy Escort (1350 points)

Total: 8976 points

The Old Republic

1x Venator Star Destroyer (1650 points)

with 48x V-wing Fighters (1152 points)
and 42x Eta2 Interceptors (1050 points)
and 6x Jedi Eta2 Interceptors (300 points)
and 24x ARC-170 Fighters inc 6x Concussion
Missiles (1800 points)
and 24x LAAT/i Gunship including
4x Assault Rockets (1320 points)

1x Dreadnought Cruiser (700 points)

2x Carrack Cruiser (740 points)

with 12x V-wing Fighters (288 points)

Total: 9000 points

Setup

Standard B5W map. In the centre of the map is a small moon, radius 3 and with an atmosphere 2 hexes thick. Starfleet forces warp in to the right of the moon in a secretly predetermined hex on turn 1d6 + 1. Republic Forces jump in to the left of the moon in a secretly predetermined hex on turn 1d6 + 1 (dice are rolled separately). All fighters and shuttles start the scenario docked with their parent ships.

Special Rules

Prometheus may use multi-vector assault mode.

Only atmospheric capable vessels may enter the moon's atmosphere.

6 of the Eta2 Actis Interceptor have Jedi pilots and thus use the superior ratings.

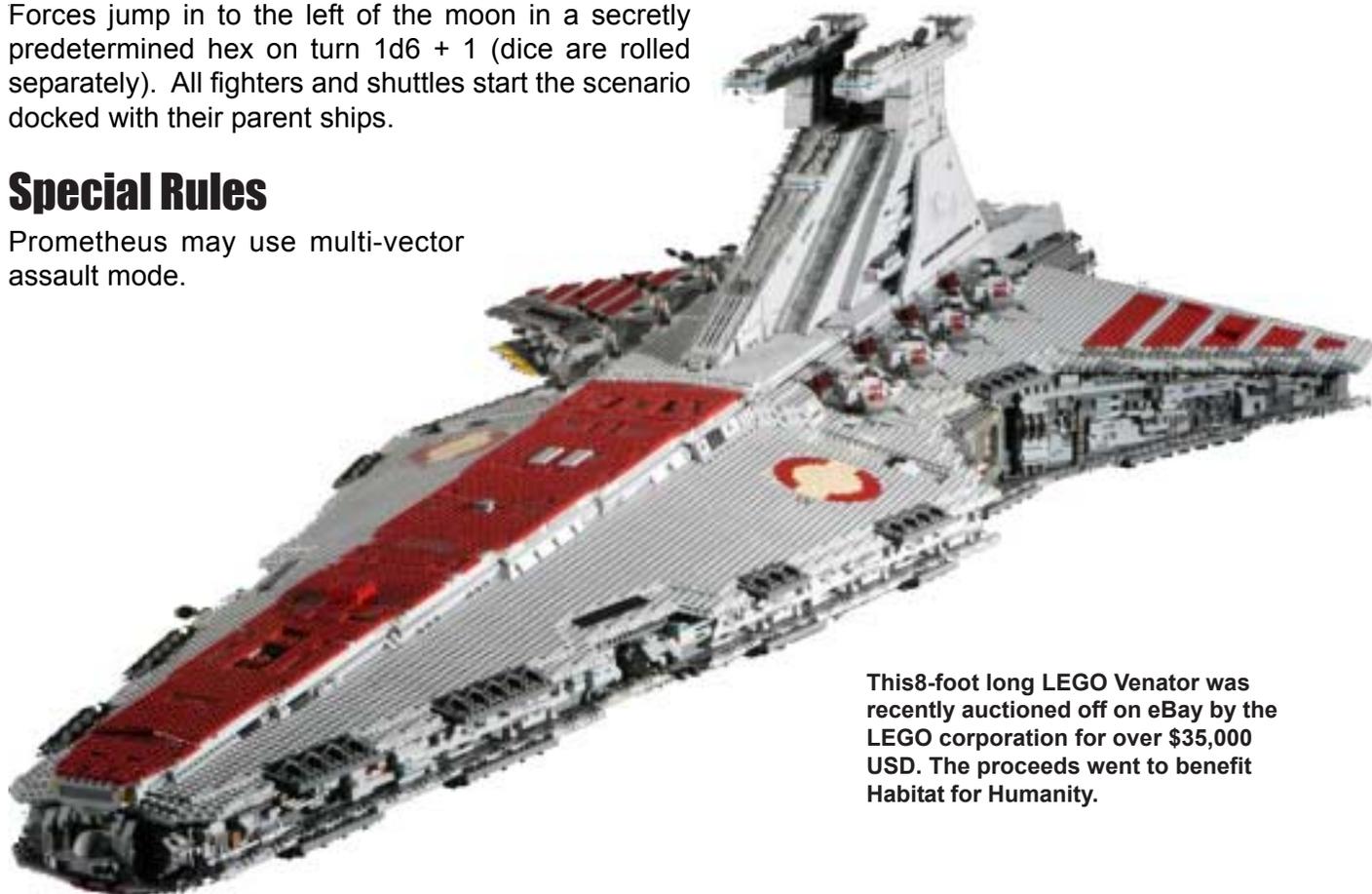
Victory Conditions

Whoever controls the space around the moon at the end of the scenario wins.

Authors Note

I have produced this scenario purely from point values, and it will be interesting to see how it plays out. The two genres operate on two completely different principles. Starfleet uses highly advanced vessels and weapons, with small numbers of heavy, well armoured fighters. The Republic uses less advanced vessels and weapons, but carries a horrendous amount of light, agile fighters. I haven't had the chance to try out the Star Wars vessels yet, so I don't know how this will play out.

* * *



This 8-foot long LEGO Venator was recently auctioned off on eBay by the LEGO corporation for over \$35,000 USD. The proceeds went to benefit Habitat for Humanity.

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

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Coming Next Issue...

There is going to be another issue?

I hope there will be, but whether there is or not will depend heavily on what kind of submissions come in. I am going to try and put together some new submissions for a JANUARY 2006 issue release. If you want to see issues come out more regularly, please submit content! Write up an article and send it in!

One topic we have rarely (if ever) received articles for The Great Machine is game tactics or strategy. If you feel up to writing such an article, we are more than willing to publish it.

Send all submissions to **submissions@firenebula.com**.

IT'S A TRAP!



Submission Deadline: Sometime this Century